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STUDIES IN PICTURES

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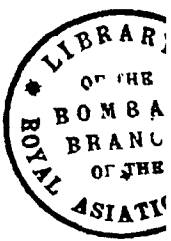
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMOUS GALLERIES

81344

BY

JOHN C. VAN DYKE
AUTHOR OF "THE OPAL SEA"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

THE masterpieces of painting need no apologies; if they did they would not be masterpieces. Sometimes, however, a word of explanation puts them in a better light. Gallery visitors are disposed to jump at conclusions about them, to exalt or debase them in advance of the evidence. That is why so many tourists return from Europe each season with mixed or violent opinions about the old masters. They have not seen truly nor comprehended adequately nor judged justly. For them, or for the newer and younger flight that goes over seas each summer to study art, possibly this little volume may prove of service. It is not put forth as the final word; in fact, it is only the first word—something designed to introduce the subject to further consideration.

J. C. V. D.

RUTGERS COLLEGE,
February, 1907.

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STUDIES IN PICTURES

PART I

STUDIES IN PICTURES

CHAPTER I

OLD MASTERS OUT OF PLACE

A GALLERY, as any dictionary will tell us, is "a room or building used for the display of works of art"; and at the present time it is about the only place where works of art are publicly exhibited. There the painter sends his product for exposition and sale, and there at stated intervals the public is invited to come and see and study. Knowing beforehand where his picture is to be shown, the painter, wisely enough, paints it with an eye to the size of the rooms, the quality of the gallery light, and perhaps the tint of the walls that make up the background. Knowing, again, the company his picture will keep he perhaps plans that it shall not be lost to view for want of vivid hues or startling theme. For the rest he trusts the hanging committee will not place it over a door or in a corner or behind a piece of sculpture. His product is what is called a "gallery picture," though it does not show to the best advantage in a gallery. No picture ever does.

It is not, however, hopelessly distorted by its surroundings. The painter knew what his picture was to meet and made preparation accordingly.

Not so the old master. He never dreamed of such a gathering place for pictures as a gallery; and if you should infer from modern custom that the great galleries of Europe, like the Louvre, the Uffizi, and the Hermitage, with their pictures of many schools, were designed for exhibition purposes, and that the Titians, Rembrandts, and Holbeins sent their works there for display, you would be in grave error. The galleries came into existence long after the painters had passed away; and the pictures were brought there from many lands and huddled together in large rooms as much for safe keeping as for exhibition. The old master never thought for a moment that the work of his hand and brain would be taken from its original setting and hung up with number and label as a relic in a foreign museum. There were no galleries in his day, and he never painted any spectacular pictures for a Salon, with the thought that it might be bought by the state for a gallery of the Luxembourg. His Crucifixion, let us say, was done for the high altar of S. Giovanni Evangelista, his Madonna and Child for the Strozzi Chapel, the half-nude portrait of the Duchess as Diana was painted for the Duke's private cabinet, and the little Cupid and Psyche, now framed in heavy gold borderings, was one of the panels in a clothes chest,

I.—GHIRLANDAJO, Last Supper. S. Marco, Florence.

perhaps painted and given to Domenico's daughter on her wedding day. Each picture that went from his workshop passed to the place for which it was designed, and each picture in its place fulfilled its purpose, and had a reason for existence. Could he foresee the passing of dukes and duchies, the decay of churches, the disintegration of families, and even of nations? Could he realize that conquerors would come, some with a strong hand, and some with tempting gold, to wrench his pictures from their places and carry them north of the Alps to be immured in galleries?

Perhaps you will think it of no importance where the pictures are placed, and at least they are well preserved in the modern galleries. Yes; they are preserved there very much as the mummy of the great Rameses is preserved in the Boulak Museum —that is, with varnish and camphor balls in a glass case. But perhaps the mummy of Rameses would be more appropriately placed in its rock-cut tomb in the Libyan Mountains, and perhaps the "Family of Darius," with its portraits of the Pisani by Paolo Veronese, would be seen to better advantage were it once more in the Pisani palace, instead of hanging, with other "specimens," on a wall of the National Gallery in the fog and smoke of London. But of this distortion of purpose and meaning I shall have something to say hereafter. Just now I wish to call your attention to some of the more material injuries

that may befall the work of art when removed from its setting and brought together with others in the gallery—injuries that may affect your estimate of the work, and with which you should not fail to reckon.

You know that in the European galleries pictures are sometimes classified by schools or countries, but seldom, if ever, according to the medium in which they are painted, the manner of their painting, or their schemes of color. They are strewn along the walls in lines or windrows with a regard only for their size and their ability to fit in certain spaces. What happens? Why perhaps a gilded altar-piece with bright colors by Crivelli is placed beside a dull panel by Jacopo Bellini, making the Bellini look washed out and thin; or a robust Velasquez elbows a weak Murillo, emphasizing the weakness and the pallor of the latter. Any modern artist who sends work to public exhibitions knows what it means to have a delicate low-keyed picture hang beside a Besnard or a Renoir (Plate 32). Even the best of Corots will look "sweet" when placed on the wall next to a Claude Monet. When the sun is in the sky we are not conscious of the stars; and when our eyes are dazzled with a blaze of high light and color from some bright-keyed picture we are not in a condition to appreciate the half-tones of the canvas next it.

Besides, there is a more serious disturbance that may take place through the proximity of pictures

one to another by their casting reflections one upon another. Bright canvases have a disagreeable way of imposing suffusions of their own color upon their neighbors. A fire-red picture by Jordaens will not help a blue-lighted interior by Van der Meer of Delft, nor will a pink-and-moss-green Boucher be improved by the close presence of a bright-hued Delacroix. Each will confuse the color scheme of the other, and help distort the original meaning.

And again, there may be a further confusion through what is called optical mixture—that is, confusion in your eye which apparently confuses the picture. If you gaze at a red spot for a few moments and then look at a white paper, you will see spots of green. After looking at blue for a minute or more other objects will appear preternaturally yellow; and after green they look preternaturally red. This is fact, not fancy; and is scientifically explained by the disposition of the fatigued eye to see the complementary color. The practical result of this in a gallery might be that when you have pondered over the bright golden-yellows of Rubens for ten minutes, you may find a warm gray Rembrandt next it looking cold and blue; and after a red picture by Poussin you may think a white Le Nain unnecessarily green. The first injury, then, that befalls the old master is that he is found in uncongenial company and suffers from the juxtaposition of other canvases.

And in any event there is always too much company. The eye and the imagination grow weary with seeing many pictures, and fail to appreciate truly any one of them. Have you never noticed how distinguished a picture may look in a painter's studio, and how commonplace the same picture may appear when hung with others in an exhibition? Have you, when in Venice, stepped in at the side door of S. Maria Formosa to study the "St. Barbara" of Palma Vecchio on its stone altar? How superbly it looks standing there in the place for which it was painted, with no other pictures near to distract the attention, save its accompanying saints! And how beautiful in that little chapel of the Badia at Florence is the "Vision of St. Bernard" by Filippino! People agree in calling it Filippino's masterpiece; and so they style the "St. Barbara" by Palma; but I wonder how much those judgments have been influenced by seeing the pictures alone and in their original settings. How long would they hold their exalted rank if placed in the Pitti or the Accademia at Venice? There they would have to fight for your attention; and there you might pass by the Filippino, just as you would a tender Perugino, because perhaps some more powerful conception by Signorelli or Piero della Francesca hung near it.

And have you ever thought of all these pictures being in strait jackets, distorted again, perhaps dislocated, by that gallery property called a gold

II.—PAOLO VERONESE (?), Industry. Ducal Palace, Venice

frame? And the frames are generally of bright gold, so bright that they are obtrusive. You keep seeing them, feeling their presence. This is a disturbance again, because in good framing one should look *through* the frame and not *at* it. It is at best merely a setting for the picture and you should not be made violently aware of its existence. The Dresden Gallery is better off in this respect than any other in Europe, because its frames are old, dull, and keep their place. But the gold frame is, at best, only a relic borrowed from the old Italian altar-piece; and while it helps some pictures, it almost destroys others. The dark portraits by a Rembrandt, a Titian, a Velasquez would perhaps appear to greater advantage if framed in ebony; a blue-green Boucher, originally set in a wall panel and surrounded by tapestries, would perhaps gain by a blue-green framing of Japanese silk; and many a pale Tiepolo would look the better for a setting of ivory-white and dull gold. But gallery tradition has hung and hanged them all in bright golden fetters—a mode of execution never contemplated by their producers. Then there is the additional abomination of coats of varnish, added in the restoring room, which produce spots and glares of light on the surface. Perhaps there is still more distortion in the shape of a glass over the picture, in which you see your own reflection and almost anything else you please except the picture itself.

And again have you ever paused in your admiration or condemnation of these old pictures to think that not one of them was painted for the light under which you see it? Some were done for church chapels; some for convent cells as Ghirlandajo's "Last Supper" (Plate 1); some for palace walls as the "Industry" (Plate 2) attributed to Paolo Veronese; some for hall and boudoir; but all were done for the dimly-lighted buildings of three or four hundred years ago. Do you wonder, then, that they perhaps blink a little under the strong sky-lights of the Louvre, or look somewhat dull and mournful pushed into the little pocket cabinets of the Brera?

The famous pictures of the Pitti are seen only by the light of side windows, and in consequence many a one has never been seen properly. The management of the gallery has done its best to obviate the difficulty by having the larger pictures hung on hinges so that they may be swung in or out to catch the light from the windows; but nothing seems to change the directness of the light—its want of diffusion. It is hopelessly bad for gallery purposes. That portrait of the so-called "Young Englishman"—supposed to be the Duke of Norfolk—(Plate 26), by Titian, is without doubt one of his finest canvases, and as noble a portrait as ever painter produced; but it cannot be seen to advantage in its room in the Pitti. Recently it has been placed upon an easel and pushed into a window recess where the light is even

III.—TITIAN, La Bella (Duchess of Urbino). Pitti, Florence.

more disastrous than before. This is equally true of Titian's "La Bella" (Plate 3), of the splendid altarpieces by Andrea del Sarto, the great canvases by Fra Bartolommeo and Perugino, and many a smaller work by Raphael that hangs there.

The "Sistine Madonna" at Dresden is another illustration to the point. It was executed, as you know, for the church of San Sisto in Piacenza and painted to be seen by the dim light falling upon the high altar. Perhaps for that very reason it was "laid in" with rather high, primary tones of color that it might be seen clearly from all parts of the church. It is now in a small room of the Dresden Gallery where it is seen only by the glaring light from a side window; and people standing within ten feet of it wonder that the color is not more "subtle," as with Whistler, and the brush work more like the handling of Velasquez and Manet! Even artists of high rank in our own day, being quite unable to make allowance for the distortion of its meaning, placing, and lighting, have referred to it as "a shoddy piece of commercialism." True enough it does not in its present place look the great masterpiece people have chosen to think it; nor did Achilles look the great hero to Ulysses when seen in the drear gloom of Tartarus; but I am willing to believe that Achilles before the walls of Troy was far from being the pale shade that Ulysses saw in the nether world, and I am sure that Raphael's altar-piece in the church of San

Sisto was a very different thing from the "Sistine Madonna" in the Dresden Gallery.

More fatal perhaps in its results than the distortion caused by conflicting lights is the false impression created by the insufficient distance at which we see these gallery pictures. A painter always, even to this day, scales his picture, adapts his composition, regulates the size of his figures, and paints broadly or minutely in exact conformity to the distance at which the canvas is to be seen. If you cannot see it at the distance the painter intended you should see it, then you are missing his point of view, and are out of focus. And for putting you out of focus I know of nothing more effective than the long, narrow galleries of the Louvre or the Prado at Madrid. There has always been a gallery mania for hanging large allegorical or decorative pictures in just such places, and more than all others these are the ones that should not be hung there.

Nothing could illustrate this better than the series of twenty-one pictures painted by Rubens for Marie de' Medici and placed in the grand room of the palace of the Luxembourg. The palace was afterwards destroyed and the pictures taken to the Louvre. For years they hung in that passage-way gallery through which bands of tourists continually do file; and for years every tourist, whether artist, connoisseur, or art-ignoramus, filed by and rejoiced to abuse "those big bad pictures by Rubens." Of course he could

see nothing from his position save foreshortened legs and feet, yet that never influenced his denunciation in the least. But within the last few years a large room, corresponding in size to the room for which the pictures were originally designed, has been built in the Louvre, and now, framed in separate panels in their new home, the "big bad pictures by Rubens" have turned out to be superb masterpieces—marvels of decorative splendor. Painters and amateurs cannot now find enough to say in praise of them. Have the pictures themselves undergone any change? Not in the least. They are merely seen from a proper distance—the distance they were originally designed to be seen from—that is all.

Rubens's pictures are not the only ones that have suffered thus. The fine Italian pictures, with the statues, bronzes, and bas-reliefs in Berlin, were never seen in the old galleries there except at a great disadvantage. Within the last three years they have been removed to the new Friedrich Wilhelm Museum, which has been fitted up with lighting, background, wall space, and surroundings to suggest, if not to reproduce, the ancient setting of these works of art. On the main floor a church interior with chapels and altars has been erected, and some altar-pieces have been placed there in the chapels, to give an idea of how the pictures might have looked in their original homes.

Everywhere in this new museum there has been the

attempt to give plenty of room, the proper illumination, and to create harmonious surroundings for the pictures by placing near them Italian tapestries, cassoni, tables, chairs, bronzes, terra-cottas. The effect is really quite wonderful. The pictures appear now much finer in quality, much more important than ever before. The whole new arrangement is a most successful attempt to obviate the disadvantages of transplanting, to do away with the distortions of purpose produced by the old museums. Mrs. Gardner's Fenway Court in Boston is another successful attempt at reconstructing a setting for pictures, at making an *ensemble,* a harmonious unity of art objects; and in this connection it is worthy of note that the Metropolitan Museum in New York has undertaken a similar enterprise with its pictures.

Of course a narrow gallery like that in the Louvre does little harm to a small picture as big as your hand, by Gerard Dou or Meissonier. They are like miniatures, and need a microscope rather than setting and distance. Nor is a portrait by Van Dyck or Holbein either greatly harmed or helped by gallery light; but it is very different with a wall picture by Tintoretto, or a series of foreshortened ceiling pieces by Paolo Veronese. Seen at short range the figures in the Tintoretto seem great lumpy giants falling out of the canvas, and the foreshortening of Paolo's figures and architecture you, perhaps, think some egregious blunder, because you are seeing them

IV —PAOLO VERONESE (?). Triumph of Mordecai. S. Sebastiano, Venice.

placed upright on the wall instead of flattened on the ceiling (Plate 4). In Venice, when you saw Paolo and Tintoretto on the walls and ceilings of the Ducal Palace did you have any protest to make about foreshortening or large figures? In Antwerp, when you saw Rubens's "Descent from the Cross" at long range in the Cathedral, did you think anything about his figures being "gigantic, coarse, and Flemish"?

The truth is that all the pictures by these great masters are rightly planned, scaled, and painted for the places they were originally intended to occupy. If we do not see them to-day from the proper point of view the fault is ours, not theirs. And the gist of what I would say just now is that the galleries are largely responsible for our false vision. We must make allowance then in picture viewing, as in almost every other pursuit or study in life, for our own blunderings—the obstacles that we unwittingly put in our pathway, and over which we are continually stumbling. We shall meet many of them in our study of pictures; and, indeed, if we ever arrive at an appreciation of any worthy thing it must be largely by a process of eliminating all the unworthy things that surround it.

CHAPTER II

PICTURES RUINED, RESTORED, AND REPAINTED

Does it ever occur to the average person in a gallery to inquire into the state of preservation of the famous old masters that hang upon the walls—the masters that are looked at with so much delight perhaps? Practically all of them have been torn from church and chapel and palace, taken away by conquerors of one sort or another and given a home, after many wanderings, in public collections; but are they in the same condition as when they first went forth from their makers' workshops? These rare things of Leonardo or Titian or Rembrandt that are now the pride of this or that gallery, have they been transferred and kept without injury? Is the jewel the same, and is it only the setting we have lost?

Ah, no! Many of the noblest and the best of pictures have been almost destroyed by time and bad restoration. The canvas hanging upon the wall in bright frame with famous name attached is often only a pretence—a thing of shreds and patches. Let me begin at once by being specific. The "Mona Lisa" is far removed from the picture Leonardo let pass from his hands. It is only a pale ghost of its

V.—TITIAN, Presentation of the Virgin. Venice Academy.

former self. All the carnations of the face that Vasari tells us about have flown and given place to leaden hues. The subtlety of the lights and shades, the flow of graceful contours, the beautiful drawing of the cheeks, the forehead, and the throat, the charm of the costume, and the perspective of the background have been worn away, almost scrubbed out of existence by cleaners' hands and a what-not of chemicals. It is a wreck, a precious thing to be sure, because we have so little left to us by Leonardo, but only a beautiful wreck!

The famous "Assumption" by Titian, in Venice, that every one goes into ecstasies over, is another wreck. There is hardly a square inch of its surface that now shows the brush of Titian. It might at one time have been a masterpiece, but to-day it is only a good illustration of how deceivingly the restoring-room can patch up a picture. It is repainted almost solidly from top to bottom, and little more than the design—the outline drawing of the figures and the composition—is Titian's. That glorious glow of color that you have perhaps innocently enough raved about is largely the work of a second-rate modern painter who, perhaps failing to paint successful pictures of his own, long ago turned his talent in the direction of "restoring" old masters and making them "as good as new."

He has restored Titian's "Presentation" (Plate 5) as well as the "Assumption." Few large canvases

have escaped him. He or his type is the genius of the gallery repair-shop to whom sooner or later almost every old master is sent. As for the celebrated "Night Watch" by Rembrandt, I was looking at it only a few months ago with the director of the gallery where the picture is now placed, and in the course of the talk he said with a little smile: "If you could see the 'Night Watch' without the deceptive varnishes and glazes you would be very much surprised." I answered that I had seen it in that condition, in the cleaning-room many years before, and had indeed been surprised. It was a sorry-looking affair. The drawing and modelling were uncertain; the lights and colors were distorted, bleached, inharmonious, almost impossible because of the old attempts at restoration and repainting. It was a clear case of another archangel ruined.

Perhaps you are startled by these statements and disturbed to find that some of the world's masterpieces are little more than ashes of roses, but you need not be. The information is not new, though it may not have hitherto found its way into print. Those who have studied the galleries thoroughly know that many of the old pictures are hopelessly injured. Please note now that I say "many," not "all." You are not to conclude because some pictures are in bad shape that every one is a false pretence, and that consequently the appreciation of art is an affectation and its history a specious lie. On

the contrary, the great majority of small pictures are still well preserved, and some of the large ones are but slightly damaged. There is enough left of the uninjured to judge from and to enjoy.

Why, then, do I mention the things that are patched together and restored? Simply and solely that you may not misjudge the dead masters. You are not to sum up the genius of a Coleridge from a fragment like "Kubla Khan," nor the genius of a Rembrandt from a wreck like the "Night Watch." Such pictures as the "Assumption" of Titian, and the "Holy Night" of Correggio, are very popular, and you may conclude that they are the best pictures their painters ever put forth. They may have been when originally painted, but they are not now. You are misjudging those great masters. If you would know them truly you must study Titian in such pictures as the early "Sacred and Profane Love" or "The Tribute Money," and Correggio in the pictures at Parma. Even the "Madonna of St. Francis" at Dresden is far better preserved, and better to study as an example of Correggio than his more mature but much injured "Holy Night."

"But why are 'restorers' allowed to ruin the old pictures?" you may ask. The question requires an explanatory answer. The harm done is, of course, not intentional. Some of it is brought about through ignorance, some through want of skill in restoration, and some could not be helped in the nature of things.

Every director of a gallery likes to have a reputation for "doing things"—keeping things clean, if nothing else. He is usually a government official and subject to inspection and criticism. When the members of a government commission march through his gallery they may know nothing about art, but if they see all the pictures looking bright and fresh, and the premises wearing a "spick-and-span" look, they conclude that the director is doing his duty, and make report accordingly. The result is that some gallery directors like to have clean-looking pictures.

Now the cleaning of a picture is always fraught with danger—especially in ignorant hands. The surface is coated with varnish, and it is the varnish that catches the dirt and has to be removed. The safe method of removing it is with the thumb—that is, rubbing it with the bare thumb until the varnish grinds into white powder and is blown away with the breath. This takes time and labor. The quick, the lazy, and the unsafe way of cleaning is with a ball of cotton saturated with alcohol. The alcohol removes the varnish almost instantly; and it will remove the painting underneath almost as instantly, if not watched and checked by washing away. You can imagine that this easy method of working is the one oftener followed, and that accidents happen when inexperienced operators handle the alcohol. The fluid eats swiftly, and, perhaps before the cleaner knows it, the legs of a figure by Watteau, or the nose

VI.—CRIVELLI, Madonna and Child. Brera, Milan.

and mouth of a Madonna by Raphael, have disappeared from view—have been literally absorbed by the alcohol.

But that does not give the cleaner more than a momentary palpitation of the heart. The blunder is to be covered up, hidden from the public by all means. So the picture goes into the hands of the "restorer," who with brush and paints calmly paints the legs and nose and mouth on again! Once more you can imagine how the drawing of the "restorer" would match and carry out the drawing of Raphael, and how his painting would tally with the vivacious handling of Watteau! But the work is done, the surface is somehow "toned down" with neutral tints, then varnished anew, and the picture is sent back to the gallery to be hung, in a dark corner perhaps, where you will not notice its patching. But the patches never match the original piece. You cannot make new paint match old paint. The picture is injured forever.

Even when the removal of varnish is carefully done, the subsequent cleaning and rubbing of the painted surface are often attended with injury. The tender surface touches, the delicate flesh tints, the more subtle shadows that give the modelling of a hand or a cheek, are often destroyed; and the picture forever after wears a pallid look, like so many of the existing portraits by Gainsborough. Cleaning, no matter who does it, always works harm; and restora-

tion is always a patching up, however skilful the hand that restores. Yet in many cases they are justified and, indeed, cannot be avoided. They are necessary evils. Let me explain that a little farther.

A picture, let us suppose by Crivelli (Plate 6), is painted in distemper—that is, with white of egg or honey instead of oil—upon a prepared *gesso* or plaster ground. The plaster is laid upon a chestnut panel. After two hundred years the wood of the panel warps and cracks, the painted surface parts, the plaster disintegrates. Something has to be done to save the picture from complete destruction. A fresco by Mantegna, say in the Church of the Eremitani at Padua, begins to scale and crumble away. The wall has become dampened by water soaking up from the foundations. The picture is being destroyed. Again something has to be done. A great oil canvas, say by Tiepolo (Plate 7), hangs on the wall for many years. After a time the canvas begins to sag in the middle and break with its own weight. The varnishes crack, the pigments break asunder, the threads of the canvas part. Once again something has to be done.

When such a thing happens—as happen it will—the picture is taken down after having been covered across its face with many pasted strips of gauze cloth like mosquito netting. It is placed face downward on a flat surface, and all the back of it, whether of wood, canvas, or plaster, is removed, planed or

chiseled away, down to the very paint itself. Then a new canvas back is put in, glued firm and fast to the paint, and the whole duly placed upon a new wooden stretcher. Then the picture is turned over upon its new back and the temporary gauze strips across the face are removed. The front or surface of the picture now has to be cleaned or at least restored where it has been broken. There is no help for it. And there is no way of making the new tones exactly match the old. Perhaps, in an amateurish way, you have painted pictures yourself; and perhaps you have tried at times to patch up or add to a sky that you had painted in only the day before. You will remember that you could not do it, and that finally you had to go back and repaint the whole sky. If such has been your experience with new work you can imagine the difficulty of touching up robes by Giorgione, or flesh by Rubens, or skies by Claude, that are several hundred years old. The result is always something false in value. The old picture is always the sufferer.

But again let me say that *not all* old pictures are injured. The smaller canvases will not break with their own weight; the little pictures on wood and copper that the Dutchmen painted do not crack like the large chestnut panels of Italy; and there are frescoes—the famous one by Benozzo in the Riccardi Palace, Florence, for example—that seem almost as perfect as when first placed upon the wall. The

smaller works may be hurt by knocks or rubbings or cleanings, but they are more likely to be in good condition than the larger pictures. Yet they are not impeccable. Sometimes, because they are small, they are hung on screens in the full, blazing sunlight to be ultimately bleached, or placed on panels near steam pipes or over registers to be scorched out of all recognition. Such things could hardly happen in any first-class gallery to-day; yet it was only a few decades ago that almost all the galleries were given over to dust and spiders, the tourist went straight away from them instead of toward them, and the pictures themselves fared no better than any other abandoned furniture. Of course pictures do not recover from such bad treatment. They always wear scars; and restorations may patch and cover and hide, but they do not really restore or atone for injuries.

At first you will not find it easy to detect injuries by repainting and restoration. The surface will all look alike. You may stand in front of Titian's "Man with the Glove" and see nothing peculiar about it. But when one at your elbow tells you that the neck is repainted you will immediately notice that the repainting creates a false value just there. The eye is easily trained and soon begins to notice inconsistencies and inequalities in a painted surface. And about the time the eye becomes very sensitive it is necessary to exercise it with caution. It may be

VII.—TIEPOLO, Way to Calvary. Venice.

too keen, see too much, lead you into making too many sweeping conclusions. Painters themselves frequently make bad blunders, are unequal, uneven, and inconsistent, or paint in different styles that often lead wise critics on false trails. The poor restorer in the cleaning-room is not to be charged up with all the ills that may be apparent in the picture. And the restorer frequently meets with ills that neither he nor any one else can remedy—ills that are due directly to the folly or the carelessness of the artist himself. I refer now to the use in painting of pigments that change color, of mixed or insecure mediums, and of that painter's pest called bitumen.

Experimenting with different mediums has been the bane of many an artist, and the ruin of many a fine picture. Did not Leonardo, defying all guild tradition, paint in S. M. delle Grazie in Milan the celebrated "Last Supper" on a plaster wall, in oils instead of fresco; and did it not begin to scale off before the painter died? There is nothing left of it to-day but restoration—nothing of Leonardo's but the bare outline of the composition. There were many uneasy Leonardos among the old painters, seeking new ways and means of painting. The sound oil method of the Van Eycks, the excellent tempera method of Crivelli, were not always followed by Tintoretto or Caravaggio or Poussin. The result is that many a Tintoretto is blackened or bleached to-day, as you may notice in his sketch work in the Scuola San Rocco

at Venice, or his pictures, such as the "Adam and Eve" (Plate 8) in the Venice Academy. Caravaggio suffers in the same way from excessive blackening of the shadows, though he was designedly deep pitched in his darks; and Poussin's colors you will frequently find changed, or bleached out of value, or with a stained look about them which no doubt came from using some mixed medium that affected the coloring matter unfavorably. Often in the large pictures of Paolo Veronese you will see skies of a dull lead color, or brown, or turned to a pea-green through the use perhaps of a blue that has changed color; and careful as Titian was with pigments he occasionally employed reds that darkened and yellows that lightened, much to the detriment of the color scheme of his picture.

The English pictures of the late eighteenth century have suffered perhaps worse than any others in the matter of fugitive colors. Many an otherwise fine portrait by Reynolds or Romney is to-day as pallid as ashes in the face, its flesh notes all gone, and its shadows turned hot and foxy. Sir Joshua's work suffered severely through his unfortunate use of unstable color; and as for the work in oil of Turner, the collection in the National Gallery is eloquent of disaster. Turner thought that "vagueness" was his forte, but he never could have anticipated such obliteration through fading color and crumbling surface. Half his skies have changed from blue to

lemon-yellow or chalk-white, and his other tones have no doubt suffered in corresponding degree. This doubtless came about through his use of any coloring matter that would answer the momentary need, and any medium that happened to be handy. He used oils, water-color, egg, India-ink, lead-pencil—anything he could lay hands upon—and sometimes all of them upon one canvas. To-day the Turner room in the National Gallery is something appalling to contemplate. But it should be remembered that it is something Turner is responsible for, and not the restorer in the cleaning-room.

Just so with the bitumen-painted portraits of Raeburn, some of which have darkened almost beyond recognition. The forehead curls of the beautiful "Mrs. Scott-Moncrieff," at Edinburgh, have almost slipped over the eyes, owing to the running of the bitumen with which they were saturated. Bitumen will not dry on a canvas any more than on an asphalt pavement. And eventually it ruins whatever it touches, as you may see by some of the pictures of Wilkie or Opie, or even our own William Page. Some of the works of Munkacsy, painted but a few years ago, are growing black almost beyond recognition; and many a reckless modern painter, who delights in the way his brush slips through a bitumen background, is preparing his canvases for a speedy exit into darkness and oblivion.

Even a black underbasing sometimes plays havoc

with a picture by working through to the surface and disintegrating the upper pigments. Van Dyck frequently painted hands, with white cuffs at the wrists, over a background that he had carelessly brushed in with black, in connection perhaps with the painting of a black dress. The hands to-day often look as though they had been handling coal, and the white cuffs are sadly soiled. The works of Ribera and Ribot are suffering from the same carelessness. Black has proved destructive to numerous pictures, and even a precise Dutchman like Terburg has left portraits that now look sooty in the face and grimy in the linen because of the dark background upon which they were painted.

So you see there are many causes for pictures not being to-day what they were when originally painted —causes for which the painter is sometimes as responsible as the restorer. But, again, you are not to infer that all old pictures are injured by bitumen and fugitive pigments. The great bulk of them were painted with sound mediums and durable pigments, and are to-day in comparatively good condition. But it is perhaps necessary you should know that accidents have happened in the best of painters' studios; and that occasionally a chemical change has distorted a painter's meaning and turned his canvas into nonsense.

VIII.—TINTORETTO, Adam and Eve. Venice Academy.

CHAPTER III

FALSE ATTRIBUTIONS, COPIES, FORGERIES

EVERY one who comes to know the famous galleries and their pictures sooner or later finds out that all is not gold that glitters, and pictures are not always what they seem. Celebrated names are often tacked upon inferior canvases, and many an old master has had to stand sponsor for work which he never knew, never saw. This false attribution of pictures is one of the worst stumbling blocks in the student's pathway. You, for instance, are looking at a "Holy Family" by Titian. Does the mere fact that it is under his name in the catalogue of the Louvre, or the Pitti, or the Prado, prove its genuineness? So far from doing so it may almost make its genuineness suspicious. And that statement is so liable to misinterpretation that it requires immediate explanation.

The directors of galleries are not loath to have great names in their catalogues. The names sound well upon the ear; they look well to the eye; they give rank and importance to the gallery. It becomes a boast of admirers that such-and-such a gallery has

twenty Rembrandts or a dozen Correggios, and people flock to the gallery because of this attraction. The student world, as well as the tourist contingent, is impressed by the show of names. Almost every one holds his breath and exclaims: "Ah! a Raphael!" when he comes up to the "St. John in the Desert" in the Louvre. Would he hold his breath and exclaim if the picture bore the name of Sebastiano del Piombo? Certainly not. That is one reason why it does not bear Sebastiano's name, as it should. Raphael never painted the picture, and you, when you are studying the picture as a Raphael, are gaining a false impression of that painter.

The Louvre has upon its catalogue no less than thirteen pictures set down under the name of Raphael. Of these there is a boyish "St. George," a small and early "St. Michael," "La Belle Jardinière," the "Holy Family of Francis I," and a portrait—five in all—that are genuine enough. But not one of the five is an important example of the painter. The other eight pictures attributed to him are by pupils, imitators, or painters who painted in a style somewhat similar to his. That the direction of the Louvre should mend its catalogue by crossing off eight Raphaels is, of course, expecting too much. It would lower the importance of the collection in the eyes of Europe. The truth must be suppressed and false art history continue to be taught. How misleading and provocative of harm all this is may

IX.—VELASQUEZ (?), Unknown Man. Berlin Gallery.

be suggested by considering one more of these alleged Raphaels in the Louvre.

The catalogue calls for a portrait of Raphael by himself. When found it proves to be the likeness of a stupid young boy, with eyes and nose ill-drawn, leaning his head upon a dropsical hand, and trying his very best to fall out of the picture-frame. Artistically, it is next to worthless, no matter who painted it. There is hardly a commendable quality about it. And yet it is astonishing how people gather in front of that picture and praise its wonderful qualities, thinking it a Raphael. Even art students, who should know something about drawing, copy the picture; and every art shop in Paris has a reproduction of it for sale. Poor Raphael! No wonder some modern artists are beginning to question his title to fame! If he has to father such pictures as this nothing can keep him in the empyrean. But he is misrepresented. The picture is of an unknown youth, and was painted by Bacchiacca. Again could you expect the Louvre people to give up the pretty tradition of Raphael by Raphael?

How many years did the direction of the Dresden Gallery fight its critics about that "Reading Magdalene," supposed to be by Correggio—the figure in a blue robe lying on the ground with the skull and the book? Was not Morelli abused as an ignoramus when he said it was not even an Italian picture, but belonged to a degenerate Flemish school? And all

the time the Dresden Gallery people must have known that the picture was not by Correggio, to say the least. Finally, they gave up under public pressure, and now the picture is relegated to the following of Van der Werff. When heavy enough pressure is brought to bear against the Louvre direction, it, too, will give up about its supposititious Raphaels, Leonardos, and Holbeins. In the meantime the public must wait while art history continues to be distorted, and art students are mystified.

But the Louvre is not to be singled out for special delinquency. Indeed, we need not go across the water. Our own museums furnish excellent examples of short-comings in this respect. Perhaps some day you may go to your municipal gallery in Boston or New York or Chicago, after reading up on Velasquez, prepared to enjoy that master. You may find pictures attributed to him in the catalogue, and yet not one of them be by him. This "Infanta," for example, may be by a pupil, possibly Velasquez's son-in-law Mazo; and this "Portrait of a Prince" by Carreño de Miranda, an imitator. Both of them may be good pictures, and suggest Velasquez without being his work. And how can you expect the authorities of a rather thinly furnished American gallery to take down the celebrated name of Velasquez and put in its stead the little-known names of Mazo and Carreño?

If you should look up Holbein or Hals or Rubens

or Terburg you might again meet with pictures under those names that are of questionable authenticity. And they might be good pictures, too. It does not at all follow because a picture is by Backer, instead of by Rembrandt, that it is a bad picture. The only fault to be found with it may lie in its mistaken label. In the National Gallery, London, there is a "Christ Bound to the Column" set down to Velasquez that is an excellent picture, in fact, quite worthy of Velasquez; as again in the Berlin Gallery a "Portrait of a Young Man" (Plate 9); but neither is by him, and when attributed to him gives people a false idea of his method and style. Likewise in the Vienna Gallery there is a "St. Sebastian" attributed to Correggio (Frontispiece) that shows none of the characteristics of Correggio, but is (to me at least) an unusual example of Giorgione. Mr. Berenson thinks it by Cariani, an imitator of Giorgione; and possibly there are others who might place it elsewhere. But the attribution or name does not render it the less or the more beautiful. It is a fine picture in itself.

All the galleries of Europe and America are more or less open to criticism for the names they append to pictures. And they are also more or less excusable. The absence of record or documents, or perhaps the existence of false tradition, together with the resemblances of school work and imitators, make the matter of attribution anything but an easy task.

Oftentimes the directors of galleries are at loss to know where a picture belongs. Some of them are very anxious to get at the truth, but are confused by the conflicting opinions of connoisseurs, who are prone to quarrel among themselves. There is agreement now among the critics that the so-called Fornarina picture (Plate 10), for instance, is neither of the Fornarina nor by Raphael. It is the portrait of an unknown lady by Sebastiano del Piombo. But pictures like the "Madonna, Child, and St. John" in the Louvre (Plate 11), given to Botticelli, for another instance, are still questioned by some. This particular picture seems more characteristic of Fra Filippo than of Botticelli—at least a good argument can be made for him. The student can know what is true and what is false only after years of long wrestling with the pros and cons of each case. Contradictions and inconsistencies beset him at every step.

There is another fruitful source of error that may bother the student. There are old copies that come down to us of celebrated works, and these are handed out by their possessors as replicas—that is, repetitions of the same subject by the same artist; when, as stated, they are only copies by indifferent hands. In the days of, say, Sir Joshua Reynolds, when a bright boy wished to become a painter he applied for admission to Sir Joshua's "painting room" more as an apprentice than as an "art student." After

X.– SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO, Portrait. Uffizi, Florence.

grinding color and doing general work about the studio for many months, Sir Joshua would, perhaps, set him at work copying some of his paintings for practice. Let us suppose that after a time the youth makes a very acceptable copy of, for example, the "Strawberry Girl." Some friend of Sir Joshua's happens in the studio, admires the copy, buys it for ten pounds; and takes it up to his country place, where it is hung in the hallway as the "Strawberry Girl" by Reynolds. Several generations die off, the story of the copy is forgotten; but the title still clings to the picture. After a hundred years of this forgetfulness, as the result of family bankruptcy, perhaps, the picture suddenly turns up in a London auction room as a Reynolds—"a replica of the one in the possession of Her Majesty the Queen," or words to that effect.

It is an old, old story, made up half of ignorance and the other half of direct fabrication; but it is not the less puzzling to the student. The copy looks like an old master, and in every respect except drawing, handling, and general quality, is like the original. And frequently there are long and wordy wars about them. There is a "Madonna of the Rocks" attributed to Leonardo da Vinci in both the Louvre and the National Gallery, London; and the dispute still goes on as to which is the original and which the copy. There are no less than three Raphael portraits of Julius II, one each in the Pitti, the Uffizi,

and the National Gallery, London; and there are two dozen portraits of Philip by Velasquez scattered through various galleries in Europe. The existence of these repeated portraits by Velasquez is quite as easily explained as the copy of the "Strawberry Girl." In Philip's days there was no such thing as photography, and when he wished a likeness of himself to give to a brother sovereign of Austria, France, or England, he simply ordered Velasquez to have a copy made from a former portrait that had proved acceptable. Velasquez in turn probably ordered Mazo or Carreño or some other pupil to make the copy, merely satisfying himself that the work was well done, and putting his official stamp of approval upon it. The recipient of the portrait was no doubt told that "Velasquez did it"; and in that way the picture was handed down in its royal gallery as a Velasquez, "Presented by the King of Spain."

Now the copy when done by an inferior pupil or common copyist is rather easily detected. The original is perhaps painted freely and boldly by a man who is not afraid of making a blunder. In his drawing he knows that if he slips over a line or pushes a light too hard, or deepens a shadow or a tone too much he can easily rub it out, do it over again, mend it quickly enough with a few strokes of the brush. People like Rubens, Hals, and Velasquez drew swiftly and handled surely; but the poor copyist who comes after them tries to reproduce their

XI.—BOTTICELLI (?). Madonna, Child and St. John. Louvre, Paris.

work a sixteenth of an inch at a time, and is always fearful that his brush will go astray and produce a false light, or give an abnormal modelling. The result is, the copy shows timidity, especially in the outline drawing and the handling of the brush. The picture is weak, spiritless, wanting in individuality; and, above all, wanting in the qualities of body, bulk, and substance which distinguish a genuine article from an imitation. If the picture is a portrait, the sitter in the copy will want the live look of the original, and will appear as though done from a photograph after death; if the original is a landscape by Corot, the trees in the copy will lack in branch-drawing, the leaves will look heavy, and the sky woolly; if the original is a blaze of color by Rubens, the copy will have flesh notes that are hectic and apoplectic, the robes will lack in depth and resonance, and the handling will lack in fluency.

On the contrary a copy made by a first-rate artist may not deceive an expert, but it will often lead an amateur astray. To the expert a picture after Rembrandt by a pupil like Bol proves itself a copy because it reveals the methods and mannerisms of Bol. The individuality of the copyist protrudes in color, drawing, and handling. I have in mind at this moment a copy of a Titian Madonna by Manet which, of course, suggests Titian, but also reveals Manet. His peculiar palette, patch painting, and handling could not be suppressed. In the same way

two portraits of the Infanta Maria Theresa in the Velasquez Room of the Prado at Madrid are almost surely by some follower of Velasquez, simply because they do not show the palette and brush of the greater master. They reveal another and a different personality.

The beginner does not read such pictures easily, and is continually deceived by them; and so, too, on occasion, are experts and artists. We are told that Andrea del Sarto's copy of Raphael's "Leo X" deceived even Giulio Romano, who had a hand in painting the original. And many times have altar-pieces been spirited out of Italy and copies put up in their places that were not detected until long years afterward. But usually the copy betrays itself either by its timidity or by its boldness.

What are called "school pieces" are often more deceptive than copies, because they are done with the assistance, or at least general supervision, of the master himself. A great painter like Rubens with half a hundred pupils and with many large orders for church pictures, was compelled to maintain something like a picture factory. He himself was too busy designing and planning to do the entire work of executing. He probably did the outlining and his pupils filled in, painting the draperies, the landscape, the animals, the accessories. Possibly as a final care Rubens did some finishing strokes, amending an error here and there. Then the picture went forth

as from the Rubens shop with his stamp of approval, like any other merchandise.

In those days it was not considered at all dishonorable to hand out school work under the master's name. Giovanni Bellini sent forth altar-pieces and small Madonnas, with his own signature upon them, that were executed almost entirely by his pupils. And he meant no deception thereby. His name was only a hall-mark, giving the stamp of excellence to art goods going out from his studio. Sometimes even portraits were worked upon by pupils or copied by them, so that there is some mystery as to where they came from (Plate 12*). All painters of importance whose services were in much demand availed themselves of their pupils' help, and none more than "the divine Raphael." The very "Leo X," of which we have been speaking, was done in part by Giulio Romano; and most of the pictures of his Roman period were executed in whole or in part by his followers. Just so, no doubt, with Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto and Tiepolo. It would seem as physically impossible for them to do everything that is placed under their names as for Phidias to have cut all the sculptures of the Parthenon. No doubt they often contented themselves with merely supervising the work. As for the school

* This portrait has been attributed to Piero della Francesca but it is not quite his drawing, which leads Mr. Berenson to suggest that it is by Verrocchio.

piece itself, it is frequently so good that it is difficult to say whether the master has not done it in a period of weariness, sickness, or haste. Usually, however, it shows the mannerisms or peculiarities of the pupils, and may be detected in that way. It is not to be despised by any means, for at least it is likely to exhibit the traditions and teachings of the master.

Nor is the forgery to be despised, not because it hands down good teaching; but because it can be, and often is, so very deceptive. There are, to be sure, plenty of clumsy efforts that deceive no one, but there are also clever efforts that have deceived the very elect. A forger working recently in Sienna succeeded in fabricating old Siennese pictures that misled the best experts in Italian painting. The forged Corot that came up in the Dumas case in Paris a few years ago is another illustration to the point. Critics and experts and gallery directors have been victimized more than once by the forger; and the number of forgeries that have crept into private collections in America is something astonishing, bewildering, appalling. Our American millionaires, whose brains have stood them in such good stead in the accumulation of money, seem to part with their common sense when it comes to the buying of pictures. They are a shining mark for the European sharpers, who have found out that an enormous price asked is considered a guarantee of genuineness in America. A forgery

XII.—PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA (?), Unknown Lady. Poldi Museum, Milan.

that is not worth fifty dollars becomes an authentic masterpiece when held at fifty thousand dollars—a process of reasoning sometimes followed in London and Paris auction rooms, as well as here in America.

If closely examined the forgery can usually be detected even by the amateur. A man's drawing or painting is very much like a man's handwriting; it has an individuality about it that is characteristic. The imitation may deceive the ignorant or the careless, but not the person familiar with the handwriting or the brush stroke. For there is the same exactness and cramped timidity about the forgery as about the copy. It lacks freedom and spontaneity. The man behind the brush is afraid and hence over-careful. He tries to turn himself into a machine and reproduce exactly, with the result once more of a lifeless product. It lacks quality in the drawing, coloring, handling; and has not the slightest tang of distinction about it. When you know it is a forgery you can see its shortcomings readily enough, but when you believe it is genuine, it is astonishing how blind you are to its imperfections. The clumsiest, stupidest forgeries imaginable have more than once deceived people of intelligence in art matters.

In all this matter of what is true or false, what is a copy or a school piece, what is repainted and what erroneously attributed, you would better follow the guidance of such experts as Morelli, Berenson, Frizzoni—men who have made a life-long study of

pictures. You will hear them denounced by those who differ with them, and, true enough, they are frequently in error, yet they are more likely to be right than others of less experience. Morelli, who died some years ago, was practically the first to take up with what has been called "connoisseurship," and his books are to this day indispensable to the student. His method has been followed and much improved by Mr. Berenson, a very competent critic who has written several short introductions to Italian painting containing lists of genuine works by the Italian painters that will be found serviceable.

But with any guide, and in any event, it will require time and much experience to enable you to sift the chaff from the wheat. In reality connoisseurship in art is not more snarled and confused than expert knowledge in law, medicine, or the sciences, but it appears so at first blush.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER IV

THEMES OF THE MASTERS

EVERY picture, as it hangs in a gallery, undergoes cross-examination, has questions asked of it by the mob that passes before it. Perhaps the question that is asked oftener than any other is, "What does it mean?" People will have it that a picture must appeal to the reason, must have some meaning that even a blind man can understand; whereas, painting primarily appeals to the senses, and is, perhaps, the one thing a blind man cannot understand. But, be that as it may, the average person in a gallery makes his first inquiry about the subject of a picture: "Who are these people? What are they doing? What are they saying?"

If you insist upon asking such questions of the old church pictures of the Renaissance time, the proper answer is that they mean almost nothing to you and to me. To be sure, we know the meaning they once had. Here, for example, is Mantegna's "Madonna of the Victory" in the Louvre. We know that the picture was painted in honor of the victory of Fornova, that the woman and child enthroned are the Madonna and Infant Christ, that the Archangel Mi-

chael on one side and St. Maurice on the other side are holding up her robe, that back of her are St. Andrew and St. Longinus, the protecting saints of Mantua, that St. Elizabeth, the mother of the Madonna, is kneeling in front; and opposite her, also kneeling, is Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, in full armor. All that seems simple enough, and no doubt meant something to the Mantuans who knelt before the picture in the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in, say, 1490; but what does it mean to you and to me, born in another land, in another age, perhaps in another faith?

A Madonna and Child with hands outstretched in blessing from some chapel recess, signified something to the worshipper kneeling below—the believing Florentine of the Early Renaissance. Religion to that person was not a thing read of in a book, but something seen upon painted walls in life-like forms. Christ on the cross was a reality in bronze or silver, instead of an abstraction conjured up in the brain; and heaven, far from being a vague abode of diaphanous spirits, was an actual city with gates of gold and flowery meadows, where angels sang and danced, as in the pictures of Fra Angelico. But what do such representations, such picturings, mean to you and to me? Are we in a position to understand them? Is not the symbolism of Christian art almost as much of a closed book to us as the funeral rites of Egypt or the Eleusinian mysteries of Greece?

XIII.—BOTTICELLI, Adoration of the Magi. Uffizi, Florence.

There are pictures, plenty of them, still standing upon church altars in Italy to-day; and there are worshippers, plenty of them, still kneeling before them; but not one of the kneelers ever asks, "What does the picture mean?" They *know*. We of an alien race, Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians —Protestants of one sort or another, people not to the manner born—keep pressing that question. And we continue complainingly that we "do not care for the old Madonnas and St. Sebastians, and St. Christophers, and cannot understand what people see in those altar-pieces." Might we not say, with equal truth, that we do not care for Hermes and Zeus and the Graces? And could we not add with equal force, that we cannot see what the Greeks admired in those stupid old Nymphs and Venuses? How much, really, has the name to do with our like or dislike? Do we admire the "Marble Faun" because it is a Faun; and do we love the "Venus of Milo" because it is said to be a Venus? We are told that this Enthroned Madonna, for instance, is La Bella Simonetta, posed with a child in her lap; and that this dancing daughter of Herodias is one of the Tornabuoni; but what does either name really signify to us? Why is not each of these women beautiful just as a woman, and each figure beautiful merely as a figure?

I do not mean to say that giving the name and attributes of St. Barbara to a handsome figure by Palma Vecchio hurts the picture. Indeed, it helps

the picture to those who know and understand and believe in St. Barbara; but for you and for me the saint no longer lives. She is almost as far removed from our ken as a Hathor or an Astarte. The literal significance of statue and tabernacle and altar-piece died with those for whom they were executed; but the types and workmanship live, because the deathless spirit of art is still with them. This is our real quest. It is not the teaching in the altar-piece, but the art in it that keeps it alive for us to-day.

The allegories of the time that found their way upon canvas are now even more meaningless to us than the stories of the religious pictures. We may read the story of the finding of the body of St. Mark and understand the meaning of Tintoretto's picture (Plate 15) if we will; but what shall we make out of Titian's so-called "Sacred and Profane Love," and Botticelli's "Spring"? They no doubt had a meaning to their painters, and were intelligible to the people of the time; but the key in each instance is lost, and the tale, even to its very name, is no longer read or readable. And yet how very little the pictures suffer by the loss. They are to-day among the most interesting canvases of those masters purely and simply because of their visible art—because of what they look. Many a picture by Rubens is none the better for our knowing what all the mythical figures are intended to represent; and that there is some confusion about the meaning of Rembrandt's "Night

XiV.—CARPACCIO, St. Ursula and Prince of England (detail). Venice Academy.

Watch" seems to make the picture none the worse. We instinctively seek other qualities in the work than its literary or representative features. The story part of it, even in a "School of Athens," rather bores us. We are not disposed to bother with it; but the types and characters and figures interest us. The figures as figures we shall speak about in another chapter; but there may be also a legitimate interest, a real enough meaning for us, in the types. They are superb as art; they are wonderful in character and poise.

Of course all the types, costumes, buildings, landscapes in the religious and allegorical pictures by the old masters are native to the land where they were painted. They represent a clime, a time, and a people; and in that respect they are illustrative of history—social, political, religious history. I do not know that the illustrative side of art is its best side, or that the painting which has history for its aim is the best kind of painting; but at least it is to be reckoned with, and it may be, properly enough, a matter of interest to the spectator of to-day. Besides, it is likely to give us a true view of the painter's own period and people. Those of us who read history out of a book get something in narrative form, some story reconstructed by the light of a German, a French or an English imagination. It may be true and then again it may be false. At any rate it has to be rewritten every ten years, which would suggest

that it is not satisfactory even to its producers. Burckhardt and Symonds and Taine and Villari may write about the Medici from four different points of view; but a picture of them by a painter of the time, from one point of view, is worth all four of the others put together. An "Adoration" (Plate 13), hanging in the Uffizi, contains the portraits of all the Medici who figure in the picture as the Magi and their attendants. There they are, painted to the life, with cap and cloak, sword and shoe, in the valley of the Arno, surrounded by the light and air of Italy. And they were all painted not by a historian living four hundred years after them, but by Sandro Botticelli, who lived with them and painted them as he saw them in the life. Certainly there is truth—there must be—in such a picture.

Just so with the "Marriage at Cana" by Tintoretto. The figures seated about the table are Italian —Venetian Italian—and of the painter's own time. The costumes and architecture are likewise of that period of splendor, when Venice was the crowned queen of the Adriatic,

"The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy."

It is true to Venice and her people as no chronicle of the literary historian could be true.

All the Venetian painters of the time, Titian, Giorgione, Paolo Veronese, Bordone, Palma, were

bearing similar witness to the glory of Venice, and writing true enough history with the paint brush. At the north Rubens and Rembrandt (Plate 27) and Steen and Terburg and Pieter de Hooch (Plate 29) were doing the same thing for Flanders and Holland. No matter what the subject given them, they pictured their own people. Rembrandt's "Supper at Emmaus" shows three poor Dutchmen of the lower classes in Amsterdam; and Rubens at Antwerp paints the "Three Graces" as Flemish women, and Paris he crowns with a flat Flemish hat. You could not, by any chance, get truer pictures of lands and races and costumes than in these canvases.

But now you come forward with an objection and say that the "School of Athens" may be true to Italy, but is false to Athens and the Greeks; that Botticelli's "Adoration" may be true to the Medici, but is false to the biblical characters; that Rembrandt paints Dutchmen instead of Palestinian types, and that Rubens makes the Olympian gods ridiculous by supposing them to be Flemish. You object still further to anachronisms of dress, architecture, and landscape, and insist that chronology is not regarded.

Yes; that is all quite true. Your objection can be sustained. I can think of only one picture in Italian art where Jewish types appear in a biblical scene. It is in the Louvre—Lotto's "Woman taken in Adultery"—and I do not know that even that is quite

true to type and costume. They were probably Venetian Jews, for Lotto painted precisely what he saw before him, like all the old masters. It is not likely that he or they could have painted anything else had they tried. Perhaps it was better so. Had Correggio and Leonardo and Dürer and Jan Van Eyck gone prowling into the past for archæological types and correct costumes, we might have had something as accurate, as empty, and as stupid as the pictures by Tissot; but we should not have had Italian or German or Flemish art.

Many of the modern painters have tried this reconstruction of the past on canvas, and have abundantly demonstrated what a soulless heaping together of bric-a-brac it may become. Alma-Tadema's pictures of Greek temples and houses and peoples or Holman Hunt's reconstruction of Jewish life in the time of Christ, are examples to the point. They are unbelievable, impossible things, simply because their authors did not feel them, did not really believe in them. They never saw what they painted, as a whole, *as a life*; they merely picked up disjointed fragments here and there and tried to reconstruct a dead past from a collection of museum curiosities. The value of the old masters' work was that they *did* see the life they painted, knew it intimately, believed in it, loved it, were proud of it.

It seems as though much of the time and patience given to archæological details by, say, the English

XV.—TINTORETTO, Finding Body of St. Mark. Brera, Milan.

Pre-Raphaelites was wasted, misapplied. The straining for exactness in a belt or a button to astonish a Philistine is counterbalanced by the objection of the hypercritical Jew that, after all, the second toe of Joseph has not been made longer than the others, and that the latchet of the sandal is not correct. The grasp at the little things of fact is a gain in trifles, while the spirit of the whole—the sense of reality, of something that the painter has actually seen—is lost. Suppose Carpaccio in his St. Ursula pictures had tried to paint all his figures in Roman garb and of a Roman type, should we not have had something similar in a way to the dreary Greek and Roman canvases of David and his following? As it is, we are interested in Carpaccio's pictures to-day, for one reason, because they show the local coloring of fifteenth-century Venice, show it with honesty, frankness, and truthfulness. They are superb in types and costumes and architecture (Plate 14). As for David, there is his fine "Coronation of Josephine" in the Louvre, which makes one wish he had never tried to galvanize into life the dead Romans. Why is it so much better than his "Sabines," if not that he saw and felt and realized the one, and that he did not see and could not feel or realize the other?

The application may be made to the historical painting of to-day with equal force. An actual occurrence as seen and painted by a Bonnat or a Cour-

bet is worth a dozen ideal abstractions named "Medea" or "Cleopatra" by Lefebvre or Bouguereau. Even an ill-drawn, badly painted battle by Verestchagin has its interest, because the painter saw it; but a Roman arena with lions and Christian martyrs, carefully painted and exactly drawn by a Gérôme, is merely something conjured up out of a classical dictionary—something that took time and trouble to accomplish, no doubt, but something wanting in life and inspiration. No; the value of a nation's art is, primarily, that it represents its own time and people. If Greek art had harked back to Egyptian times, and Italian art devoted itself to an exposition of biblical archæology, they would have had small value in art history to-day. Anachronisms in the picture may be incongruous, chronology may be badly distorted, and at times even ridiculous; but the loss is more than compensated for by gaining the truth of what the painter actually saw.

You will value this truth more when you come to study the portraits scattered through the European galleries. They, again, *mean* little to us, for many of them are nameless. We do not know this proud lord or that fair lady. Their titles have perished from memory, and all we have in the catalogue is an "Unknown Man" or an "Unknown Lady." But how very impressive are the types! The painter saw them in the life; he did not guess at their personalities. There is Moroni's "Tailor," which is noth-

XVI.—GHIRLANDAJO, Birth of Virgin. S. M. Novella, Florence.

ing but a portrait, Antonello da Messina's "Unknown Man" in the Louvre, Titian's "Man with the Glove," Rembrandt's "Staalmeesters," Van Dyck's "Van der Geest"— all seen in the life. And what splendid representatives of their land and people they are! With what supreme command and repose this Doge looks at you, with what dignity this senator or warrior carries himself, with what grace and loveliness this lady pauses in her walk and stands gazing from the canvas! It may lend a slight interest to know that we are looking at the Doge Loredano or one of the Morosini or the Duchess of Urbino (Plate 3); but the real charm of the picture lies in the type and the nobility of the carriage.

We are now perhaps coming a little nearer to the meaning of these old masters. They count for much in art because of their fine types, their wonderful dignity and repose, their grace and charm and loveliness, and their profound truth. We may add other qualities of a lofty nature, such as power in Michael Angelo or imagination in Tintoretto or infinite grace in Leonardo or supreme splendor in Paolo Veronese or world-wide pathos in Rembrandt. Nor should we overlook the earnestness, the honesty, the frankness that seemed to be characteristic of almost every painter in the schools. No matter what the subject, the Bellinis, the Carpaccios, the Ghirlandajos (Plate 16), the Van Eycks, the Clouets, the Dürers, always painted with sincerity. There is an "I believe"

written across all their works which no one can fail to respect and admire.

As a result of that "I believe" the old painters came to have what has been called "feeling" about their subjects; and this "feeling" found its way into their pictures, and is apparent even in their workmanship. We speak of it to-day as "religious feeling," and insist upon it that it has to do solely with the sentiment of religion; but it appears in profane subjects and in portraits as well as altar-pieces. Filippino, Costa, Francia, Lorenzo di Credi show it in all themes; Botticelli has it in his Madonna, but also in his "Pallas" and in his "Venus"; Perugino depicts it upon angel faces, but also upon the faces of the people of Perugia. Perhaps it had better be considered in some measure an expression of the painter's sincerity. It is a phase, a manifestation of the earnestness, the intensity of purpose, that abounded in the workshops of the Renaissance. With other qualities that I have mentioned it may suggest one distinct message, at least, that the old masters may have for us—the message of faith and truth.

CHAPTER V

WORKMANSHIP OF THE OLD MASTERS

THE pictures by the old masters that line the walls of the European galleries, as we have already concluded, were not painted for us, were not meant for tourists and art students and twentieth-century connoisseurs with jaded appetites. All the Madonnas and Magdalenes and Dianas of the Italian painters, with their portraits of lords and ladies, belong to a by-gone age; and our sympathy with them can go little further than an admiration for a type or a liking for a sentiment. But if the subjects are obsolete the skill of the artist still lives, the workmanship of the pictures is still of vital interest. They may *mean* little to us, but they *look* superb things. For the old masters were excellent craftsmen—better, if perhaps less complex, than the masters of today. They wrought with knowledge and taste, as well as with sincerity; and it was their grasp of craftsmanship, their ability to execute as well as plan, that made possible the splendid art of the Renaissance.

In Italy, every painter had to serve an apprenticeship under the rules of the guilds. He began as a

boy in the *bottega* or workshop, and was, perhaps, not a master painter until he was a full-grown man. He was there taught, not to paint pretty faces or affecting stories, but to prepare panels and gesso backgrounds, to grind colors, lay gold, beat metal, model plaster, fill spaces with ornamental patterns and figures. He learned the guild traditions of fitness and proportion, color harmony, decorative effect. When he left the *bottega* to work for himself he was a skilled workman with a knowledge of materials and methods—a man who could do almost anything in his department.

Perhaps the first order that came to him was from some church that asked him to paint a picture in a lunette or half-arch over a door. The church people wanted the empty space filled with something ornamental. As for the subject an "Annunciation" would probably be called for on account of its popularity.

With the "Annunciation" for a theme it might be thought that the painter would "read up" on his subject to get all the details correct, then seek out some sweet-faced girl for a Madonna, and her brown-eyed little brother for an angel, and finally, after casting himself into a religious ecstasy, paint the picture in an inspirational trance. Such is sometimes fancied to be the manner of painting great pictures; but nothing could be further removed from the actual truth. The painter would never forget for a moment

XVII.—BENOZZO GOZZOLI, Head of Lorenzo de' Medici (detail).
Riccardi Palace, Florence.

that there was a space to be filled with something beautiful to look at—something decorative and appropriate to a half-arch over a door. There would be forms as forms and colors as colors to be treated. They would demand pictorial arrangement, and what names the priests and brothers chose to give them afterward would be of no great moment to the painter. Perhaps the disposition of the figures would place the Madonna kneeling at the right, the outline of her curved back and bowed head following the upward sweep of the half-arch. The angel with the message would be opposite the Madonna, kneeling; and with lilies in hand and bent figure complementing the opposite curve of the arch. In between the figures might be the desk at which the Virgin was praying, the white dove, a door opening at the back upon a landscape, and in the distance the towers and domes of fair Florence. As for coloring, cool blues and greens might balance warm reds and yellows, and neutral tones of dull orange, red, lilac, brown, gray, might mingle to make a composition harmonious to the eye.

And through all the work, from start to finish, would be employed the greatest skill and the richest and best materials. The halo about the Madonna's head might be of gilded mosaic, or of radiant lines cut through laid gold; the lights upon her hair, and the lines upon her floating veil, might be given again in threads of gold; and the pattern of her dress, the

border of her robe, might be touched with the same precious metal. Every color would be quite perfect in its purity, and every pattern of embroidery delightful in its design. The angel, too, would perhaps have wings with golden peacock eyes upon them, as in the Riccardi frescoes of Benozzo, a crown of glory, bright with jewels, upon the head, and garments of wondrous light and gorgeous borderings. The white dove, with its trail of sunlight, the doorway, with its inlays of colored marble, the mosaic pavement, and the distant city, with its domes and campanili shining in the sun, would perhaps complete the picture.

As a result, you might have something so beautiful as decoration, so appropriate in its architectural niche, so attractive just for what it looked, that you would not think about what it meant, any more than you would ask the meaning of the mosaics in the domes of San Marco at Venice. At least, if you saw such a picture to-day in such a place, you should be able to admire it and understand it regardless of its being an "Annunciation," regardless of its being a church picture, regardless of its having a symbolic meaning of any kind.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the exquisite workmanship or the beauty of the materials used by the Italians of the Early Renaissance. In the little chapel of the old Medici palace (now called the Riccardi) at Florence there is an "Adoration of the Magi" by Benozzo Gozzoli, covering three

walls of the room, and showing the Magi and their attendants with horses and leopards and dogs winding through a valley landscape up to the stable where the Child was laid. Unfortunately the Madonna and Child, originally on the fourth wall, have been taken away; but the other three walls are almost as perfect in condition as when originally painted. Along them a grand procession of richly garmented Florentines, with caparisoned steeds, moves in glittering splendor. Many of the people are portraits from life, and all have a character and dignity, a nobility of bearing that make one wonder (Plate 17). They move like kings and princes, and are really impressive for what they represent. But aside from that, aside from any meaning the fresco may have as religion or as history, the mechanical workmanship of it is as perfect as a piece of *cloisonné*. The patterns of brocade, the embroideries of the mantles, the reliefs of spur and bridle and sword in gilded stucco are superb in their design and their richness. It is to-day an amazing fresco, and yet, when done, it was perhaps not more amazing than any other work of the time. It has had the good fortune to be well preserved—that is about all.

There is hardly an Italian picture of the Renaissance time or before that will not show similar material beauties of workmanship. The early distemper panels of the Byzantine and Romanesque periods, wretched as the figures were in drawing, perspective,

light and shade, and ignorant as the painters were of landscape, of blue sky and sunlight, were nevertheless masterpieces of artistic method. The gold grounds with their incised designs, the beautiful aureoles and halos, the jewelled and gilded reliefs, the coloring and patterning of robes, the borderings of chairs and tables, the arabesques of fruits and flowers, were wrought with an exactness and an honesty unparalleled in the history of art.

This splendid workmanship in gold and colors was carried on and down in Italian art as a tradition. In Florence all the Giotto followers practised it; Gentile da Fabriano, Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli continued to use it into the Early Renaissance; and at the north the Vivarini of Murano showed it in the gilded altar-pieces made for the Venetian churches before the time of Titian and Giorgione. Some of these altar-pieces, still existent in Venice, are to-day little short of marvellous in the proportions of their framing, the fineness of the gilding, and the patterning and coloring of the garments (Plates 18 and 19). The painter in those days was a master craftsman at least.

When the Early Renaissance came in, and people began to look more at nature and think more about realism in art, the gilded halos and jewelling began to disappear. Botticelli still used gold to line a robe or touch the hair or the veil of the Madonna, but he had begun to see other beauties in form and color

XVIII.—VIVARINI, Altar-piece. S. Zaccaria, Venice.

that were quite as material, yet quite as beautiful, as gilding. He had fallen in love with flowers, garlands, trees, fruits, twining vines, flowing draperies, willowy figures. Look once more at the "Spring" in the Florence Academy (Plate 20). Never mind about its meaning, and do not bother with the so-called Graces or the Mercury, as such. Let the whole allegory take care of itself, and look for a moment at the gorgeous dress the figure called Flora is wearing. Have you ever seen anything more beautiful? And when you have finished with that pattern, look at the white fleecy drapery of the Graces, the gold-dotted garment of the Mercury, the flowers spattered along the foreground, the fruits and foliage of the background.

In the Uffizi you will find his "Madonna and Angels" called "Il Magnificat"; but, again, do not be content with the sad faces and the pathetic sentiment. Look at the dresses, the borderings, the veils, the golden crown, the beautiful coloring. In the Pitti there is his "Pallas," but once more let the classic story take care of itself, and the wistful face of Pallas go unexplained. In their places look at the vine-and-branch design upon the bodice of the Pallas and the wreath about the head. You have never seen—you probably never will see again—such common things in nature so beautifully handled in art. Believe me, this is art at its very best, in its most naïve and soulful utterance. It is decorative

art, and Botticelli was concerned that it should decorate in the same way as a spiral of well-wrought iron or a branch of beaten gold. Yet when one can see and say so much about simple things, is that not also expressive art? It does not tell you anything of religion, love, or patriotism; but it tells you something about the look of leaf and branch that you probably never knew before.

As the Renaissance moved on to its height, painters began to see other beauties in the world besides spring flowers, arabesques of fruits, and fleecy draperies. They began to study the human figure and to see that there was beauty in its structure, its fitness, its proportions, its movement, its coloring. The early men had made a start at drawing it, but their effort, though naïve, was awkward and incomplete, as you may see in the "Venus" of Lorenzo di Credi in the Uffizi. It was Raphael who carried to perfection its grace of outline and action in his "School of Athens" in the Vatican, for instance, or his Psyche decorations in the Villa Farnesina. Never mind the Athens or the Psyche part of it, but look at the figures as figures, and you will see what he sought for. Michael Angelo, after Masaccio, discovered the majestic strength of the human form and pictured that to perfection, as witnesses his "Creation of Adam" on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Again dismiss from thought the name and the meaning of it and look only at the figure. And so, if you will look at

the "Mona Lisa," forgetting all about her story, and, thinking only of her face and features, you may see in that sadly injured picture what the third great Florentine, Leonardo da Vinci, found to be beautiful in humanity. The lovely contours of the neck, the delicate modellings of the cheeks, the recesses of the eyes are still suffused with Leonardo's wonderful light-and-shade, his famous "sfumato."

Farther to the north, at Parma, was Correggio, who saw still other beauties in the figure. His men and women that bear Christian or classic names show wonderful grace of line, wonderful movement, wonderful light-and-shade; but to these he added also wonderful color. Giorgione at Venice, at the same time and with the same qualities, color included, was not less remarkable. The so-called "Sleeping Venus" in the Dresden Gallery will furnish the proof. It is probably not a Venus. No one knows who or what the figure represented at one time; but any one, at any time, can see that as a figure it is easily the most beautiful nude in the whole realm of pictorial art. And at Amsterdam was Rembrandt, still another painter looking at the world through a prism and seeing objects fading from light and color into the mystery of deep shadow. His battered "Night Watch" is eloquent of it; and every portrait, figure piece, and landscape by him is a revelation of it. Call them by what name you please, but the pictures of all these men reveal what their paint-

ers intended them to reveal; and Correggio, Giorgione, and Rembrandt never painted any canvases, at any time, without first planning a decorative effect in light, shade, and color.

The Venetian school of painting has always been placed above the Florentine. Pictorial art reached its climax in the city of the sea. Why? Because it was more intellectual or illustrative of history or religious or sentimental or fetching from a literary point of view than art elsewhere? Not at all. Venice was below Florence in those qualities, but above Florence in richness and splendor. Titian, Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, Bordone, Tiepolo were the greatest in decorative effect of all the Italian painters. Line and form and light and color; gorgeous stuffs, rich robes, shining armor, gold and jewels, magnificent types, fine figures, noble landscapes, lofty architecture—all things that Italy had discovered in nature and in art were blended at Venice. The final harmony of the Renaissance was reached there. And again it should be insisted upon that the harmony was perhaps more material and purely decorative than expressive or intellectual.

It is perhaps unnecessary to point out this decorative aim in the works of Dürer, Holbein, Rubens, Pieter de Hooch, Velasquez, Watteau, Gainsborough. The filling of space with beautiful things, beautifully wrought, continued as a tradition even after the decline of the Renaissance. True enough, spandrels,

XIX.—VIVARINI, Altar-piece (detail). Venice Academy.

lunettes, domes, and ceilings were no longer used so extensively as a ground for decoration. The so-called easel picture came into vogue. Religious painting passed out in favor of portraiture, historical pieces, and genre. But the subject has never at any time changed the painter's point of view; and as for the space to be filled, whether it is a square of canvas in a gold frame or a triangle of wall, it has to be treated in the same decorative manner.

That idea has always held in the studios. Pieter de Hooch's Dutch cavaliers, and Watteau's courtiers of the Regency are primarily pegs upon which to hang gay color and warm light; and a "Charles I" by Van Dyck, or a "Mrs. Graham" by Gainsborough, though it represents an actual person, and is a true enough portrait, is also a panel of beautifully arranged color and light-and-shade. A landscape by Corot, or an interior by Decamps deals with the same problem. An evening view along the Seine may give us the feeling of the sunset hour and have all the sentiment of twilight and the poetry of repose about it; but in its construction Corot never forgot for a moment the problem of space-filling, branch-and-bough drawing, light, shade, color. Just so with Diaz and Troyon. Though one painted forest interiors and the other cattle of the fields, the decorative necessity and the picture-making instinct were still with them. They insisted always that things should *look* something as well as *mean* something.

The same decorative sense in painting is dominant to this day. Painters are still striving to make their pictures look beautiful by new materials, new technique, new methods, new mediums. Mr. Sargent's ceiling in the Boston Public Library, the subject of which you do not understand and which is really a jumble of all subjects in past art, is a good illustration of this. Its meaning may be dismissed as meaningless, but how superb are its materials in colors and gold! Its composition is huddled by a strange desire to paint all the gods of all time in one picture; but how magnificent is the drawing and painting of the single figures—the beautiful Astarte, for instance! The "Misses Hunter," which you saw at the St. Louis Exposition, is a portrait group; but there again Mr. Sargent strove for beautiful effects in grouping, drawing, coloring, lighting. Almost all his portraits are so planned and so executed.

And all painters at the present day, as in the past, are striving in their pictures to paint beauties that can be seen. Even the Impressionists, who are popularly but erroneously supposed to be the apostles of ugliness, are so-minded. Claude Monet has for years been trying to show you the beauty of sunlight, colored air, and colored shadows upon haystacks, Rouen Cathedral, and Westminster Towers; but you worry about Rouen and Westminster and what they mean, and never see the sunlight, the air, or the shadow.

Lest you misunderstand, perhaps it should be said

XX.—BOTTICELLI, Spring (detail). Academy, Florence.

again that subject and meaning in painting are by no means to be despised. Ideas in art, the significance of things, must always exist to lend coherence; but, as I have tried to explain, these may be perishable features. They keep slipping away like the teaching of the "Sistine Madonna" or the story in Botticelli's "Spring," leaving only the figures, the colors, the workmanship behind. These latter, which make up the material and decorative look of the picture, are the enduring features. They live for us to-day in a decorative sense if we will but accept them and look at them in the proper way.

So it is that the painter—the artist-workman as distinguished from the pietist or the historian or the novelist with the paint brush—must be reckoned with in all our study of art. Heretofore in history and criticism he has been overlooked in favor of some teller of a pretty story or some recorder of a pretty face. But the work cannot be properly understood without considering the worker; and while we are studying pictures in the gallery we should not fail to regard art from the artist's point of view, and give the decorative the consideration it deserves.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

STUDIES IN PICTURES

PART II

CHAPTER VI

FIGURE PAINTING

We may now leave generalizations and speak specifically of the kind of pictures that one meets with in the various galleries. Pictures are divisible into groups, and may be treated according to the themes they present. The groups are generally spoken of as figure pieces, historical canvases, portraits, landscapes, still-life, and the like. Of these there will be found in almost every collection a predominance of figure pictures. Humanity has always been more interested in itself than in anything else; and artists, from the beginning of history, have been busy perpetuating the likeness of their own people, and recording with chisel and paint brush the doings of their own race. It is a piece of egoism with which it is hardly worth while to quarrel. Besides, with the human figure for a subject, many things of importance have been said, some of them wise, some of them splendid, some of them powerful, some of them graceful. Yes; and a great many foolish things have been said also. There were shallow old masters, as there are silly young masters, and nowhere is the gallery of art of uniform excellence

from entrance to exit. We must use discrimination in what we admire, and some pictures should perhaps be passed by with no admiration whatever.

The narrative or story that is told by a picture need not keep us long. That is not what I meant by the "thing said." With a piece of coal on a white-washed wall any one can, after a fashion, tell the tale of the Nativity or the Crucifixion or Achilles in his Tent or Charlotte Corday in Prison; but the telling of it would not necessarily make art. There are pictures of battles, of princely pageants, of coronations and marriages, of Niebelungen happenings, and Holy Grail incidents, wherein all the facts are faithfully set forth; and there are interiors with seventeenth-century cavaliers playing at cards, or twentieth-century young women seated at gossip; but again, in either or in any case, the story told is not the picture. It is not difficult to draw with measurable success, a man in Empire uniform standing on a ship's deck, and to call the result "Napoleon on the Bellerophon"; but to draw and paint a figure that stands and looks and *is* the dethroned emperor, as Orchardson has done, that is quite another thing. That a figure should have definite character is vitally important.

It is this very quality of character in the figure, when forcibly given, that brings conviction as truth, and creates a sense not only of reality but of beauty. And character does not rest alone in a scowling brow

XXI.—MILLET, Man with Hoe.

or a furrowed cheek. I shall have something to say about that when I come to speak of the portrait; but there may be a portraiture of the figure quite as effective as of the face, and character may be expressed in finger tips as well as in nose tips. There is on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome a seated figure of the Delphic Sibyl by Michael Angelo with a fore-shortened right arm and a limp half-opened hand resting upon the knee that speaks character quite as forcefully as the solemn face. The hand has power, though it is not clenched; and it has beauty, though it is not what would be called "select." There is about it a something of the mystery that wraps the whole figure. It belongs to the figure, and has in itself a Sibylline quality, an austerity, a wonderful dignity. Compare it for a moment with the hand of the Samian Sibyl by Guercino in the Uffizi, and you will note a great difference. The Guercino picture shows simply the nondescript hand of a pretty model, and would fit as well the figure of a Juno or a Beatrice Cenci as a Sibyl. It is weak and lacks character.

Consider the hands in the "Mona Lisa" by Leonardo da Vinci, and what wonderful truth and beauty they reveal! They, on the contrary, are very "select," quite ideal in proportions, lovely in their symmetry and softness. And how perfectly they belong to the wrist, the arm, the whole figure! That smiling face and the riddle that lies back of the dark

eyes are supplemented and complemented by those beautifully drawn hands. They are in themselves something of an enigma. Compare them again with the so-called "aristocratic" hands of some noble lady by Sir Godfrey Kneller (or even by so excellent a painter as Van Dyck), and you cannot but feel the difference. The Kneller (or Van Dyck) hands may be adjusted to almost any lady, and are only a degree removed from those of Cabanel, with their manicured finger-nails, and their suspicion of scented soap.

The drawing of the hand is considered the very hardest problem the draftsman has to solve, so you will see that some value attaches to its portrayal. If truthfully rendered, it may be not only a revelation in itself, but it may reveal the person back of it. And for the illustration of this I refer you to the characteristic hands in Van der Helst's "Banquet of the Civic Guard" in the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam. It has been said that if every one of them were cut off and thrown into a basket there would be no trouble in putting them on their respective owners again, so absolutely do they belong to the figures.

Our modern pictures do not show such careful realization of the model. Indeed, the hands are now often hidden or merely brushed in, "blocked in." And that, too, with a designed slur, as though to emphasize their want of importance. Mr. Sargent

can, if he will, paint them superbly; but he and many of his contemporaries often dismiss them summarily. It was just so in the days of the old masters. The Dutch museums will bear witness that Rembrandt delighted in painting hands, and did them beautifully, while the same museums intimate that Frans Hals was often careless and impatient with both hands and feet.

The foot is something usually not noticed by visitors in the picture gallery. The average person never gives it a thought. The painter on the contrary thinks much of it, and sometimes wonders how he can hide it or get rid of painting it altogether. The tradition still runs that the Venetian Bassani put sheep and cooking utensils in the foreground of their biblical pictures to shut out the feet of their men and women. The reason for this seems to be that it is not easy to make the pictorial man stand on his feet and stand firmly. The whole poise of the body, its weight, bulk, and carriage, depend upon how the feet are placed upon the earth. They seem to impart the sense of life, the power of action, the ability to move and bend. This was one of the last things learned by the old masters. Giotto and Duccio and Gentile da Fabriano often drew people that tilted upon their heels like wooden manikins; and the Early Renaissance men were given to types smitten with stiffness in all their joints. Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, and the Venetians (Plate

22) comprehended matters better, but they were not always perfect. Even to this day the painter worries about the planting of the foot. Whistler was concerned about it, and never wearied in asking whether his figures stood firmly or not. Well he might, for the character of the figure may often be determined by that spring of action.

Not that there is any one specific character which, if given, will answer for each and every foot. On the contrary, that member is almost as individual as the hand and must complement the figure in a similar manner. It cannot be expected that a city girl should have the same kind of feet as a bare-footed peasant girl of France. Their occupations give to each a special fitness for a special purpose. Therefore, when you see a picture by Bouguereau called "The Little Gleaner," it should not take you long to conclude that the feet and hands and face are too soft and pretty and clean for the fields; and that, in spite of the costume and the property wheat held in the hand so gracefully, Bouguereau is merely giving a variation of the same studio model that poses for "Spring" or "Psyche."

What you miss in the feet, and for that matter, in the whole figure, is character. And this is precisely what you gain in Millet's "Gleaners." The feet of the bending women are coarse and heavy; but is not that the way labor—contact with the earth—has

XXII.—PALMA VECCHIO, Holy Family. Venice Academy.

fashioned them? The shoes make the feet look unusually large, but does that not help out the firm manner in which the figures stand or move? Have you any doubt about the feet belonging to the figures, or is there any question that these are real peasants pictured as they actually live and have their being? The "Man with a Hoe" (Plate 21) may be a falsehood politically and socially—or at least the thoughts put into his mouth by Millet commentators may be all wrong—but physically he is a fact. He stands on his feet, he bends, he leans, he rests from labor. It is this truth of characterization that Millet has given his peasants that makes them convincing—makes them great in art.

There is just as much truth, though of a different kind, in the jaunty pose of a soubrette by Watteau, or the upward spring of a ballet dancer by Degas, or the shuffle of a Dutch boor by Ostade, or the swing forward of the Captain and his Lieutenant in Rembrandt's "Night Watch." In the drawings by these masters, hand and foot, arm and leg, head and body, are all of a piece; each fitted to each, and each intensifying and making virile the character portrayed. Look again at Millet's "Gleaners." What arms and backs and heads they have! How they bend and gather and bend again! The feeling of life and motion is everywhere present. You cannot choose but believe in such wonderful types.

The same kind of humanity, that is, peasants,

stone breakers, workmen of the town, were painted many times by Courbet, Legros, Daumier. These painters knew the gait, the stoop, the lift of labor; and they portrayed it with telling effect. And what splendid life was imparted by Rembrandt, Frans Hals, and Velasquez! When they drew an arm or a back or a neck or a waist, it was not with any classic line or cut-and-dried proportions. They did not bother with petty realisms, nor yet again with academic traditions. They painted what they saw before them and endeavored to give the character of the whole figure. How well they succeeded you may see by the pictures in the galleries at Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Madrid, which are to-day the wonder of the art student.

It is precisely due to the truth of character given them by their painters that such rough uncouth people as Hals depicted became beautiful in art. If it were not so who would care for his jolly men or for the brawling peasants of Brouwer or the brutal soldiers of Goya? They were not graceful or beautiful types in the life. They became beautiful in art because of the superior insight of the artist, and his revelation of their fitness to a designed end. The character of them is given so impressively that they become admirable even though repulsive. The beauty of the ugly is not a paradox but a fact (Plate 23).

On the contrary, the beauty of the comely is often

open to question. In the hands of painters like Carlo Dolci, Sassoferrato, Raphael Mengs, or Cabanel types of elegance and refinement became affected, sentimental, forceless. Regularity of feature and perfect symmetry of form could not save them from a feeling of pretence and insincerity. The figures failed to convince any one of their reality, because they lacked a fitness for a purpose, and were wanting in positive character. The suspicious individual in art, as in life, is usually the one of smooth appearance and indefinite description.

From this, however, it is not to be inferred that art consists solely in peasants by Millet or fish-wives by Hals or dwarfs and hoop-skirted Infantas by Velasquez (Plate 25). True enough, the picturesque is often somewhat removed from the regular and the symmetrical. It has been said more than once that a straw-thatched cottage makes up a better picture than the most perfect Greek temple. In the same sense a blue-frocked peasant from Barbizon might be better material for the painter than a dandy from a Paris club. But lords and ladies and fine clothes have appeared in art many times and with superb effect. Ghirlandajo, Mantegna, the Bellini, Carpaccio, all painted them; and with such integrity of character as has not been seen since their day. After them came the fine, dignified types of Palma Vecchio, the regal creations of Tintoretto, and the splendidly costumed figures of Paolo Veronese.

There is no lack of integrity or drawing with such men. Paolo's noblemen stand or move or turn as truthfully and easily as Millet's peasants, but quite differently. A duchess by Paris Bordone sits as realistically as a housewife by Teniers, but the attitude is not the same. The duchess rests like a duchess, and the nobleman stands like a nobleman. To each is given the attributes that are significant of rank and individuality. There may be as much, if not more, character in the figures of the great as in those of the humble. Titian's "Charles V" rides like a king, and the little "Don Balthasar" of Velasquez like the child that would be king. Both of them are as characteristic and as typical of their kind as a Dutch boor by Steen or a chasseur by Meissonier.

In a general way the choice of clothes and figures and faces are matters of liking, matters of temperament with painters. The master can create the masterpiece out of beggar or king, as he chooses. It made small difference to Velasquez whether he were painting Philip or the court buffoon; and Rembrandt could make a picture from an Amsterdam Jew in rags as readily as from a burgomaster in velvet. They were both intent upon giving the truth of life before them. That, indeed, absorbed them. But in modern times there are not so many supreme masters, nor have they such singleness of aim as the masters of the past. And, besides, the weaker breth-

XXIII.—TORBIDO, Old Woman. Venice Academy.

ren of the brush to-day are rather impressed with the idea that fine art means fine faces and fine clothes, They do not like the laborer, the peasant, the common people as models. The Bouguereaus and Lefebvres care little for naturalistic drawing and less for characteristic types. They admire what is called "the ideal."

Now the ideal is no new thing under the sun. It is a conventional type which has been handed down by tradition; and it consists of a selection and a combination of the fine qualities of the many in the one. By a process of elimination, taking only the most perfect parts, a figure is constructed which is supposed to approximate in proportions the Greek ideal. In appearance it usually has a predetermined height and weight and a preternatural elegance of bearing, both of which are quite impressive at first; but after a time we begin to see that they are artificial—that is, machine-made—and that the whole is merely an empty pretence. Instinctively we feel that such a type is

"Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

It is not true to human experience; its life is simulated life, and its movement is arrested movement. Like those exotics that grow in houses, its bloom is hectic and its odor calls up memories of a perfumery shop.

You cannot choose but see this ideal figure in every gallery you enter. After Raphaël and with the painters of the Decadence in Italy it was freely adopted. The Italianized Flemings and Dutchmen used it; Murillo consistently and persistently employed it to the point of weakness (Plate 24); the academic element in French art has always exploited it; David, Ingres, Flandrin, Cabanel, Bouguereau, are names that suggest it. Empty, and forceless, it is nevertheless popular, patronized, and regarded by many as a paragon. And, indeed, considered decoratively, it may be very far from worthless; but as an expression of life, truth, and character, it is weak and without value. Such an insipid formula could never express true feeling in art.

The accompaniment of the ideal figure is usually the ideal face. It is constructed by the same table of elegant proportions as the figure, reckoning that the nose shall be of such a length, the cheeks and chin of such an oval, the brow of such an arch, the forehead of such a height. In the hands of the artist-mechanic it becomes merely pretty, and it is difficult to keep it from falling into prettiness in the hands of any painter. You often see this face employed in fashion plates, on handkerchief boxes, on placques. It smiles and tries to look engaging, but it takes no phrenologist to see that there is not a brain in the head or a line of character in the countenance. It is an empty formula again, and yet

XXIV.—MURILLO, Madonna and Child. Pitti, Florence.

when painted by Lefebvre or Madrazo or Chartran, it is astonishing how readily people accept it. It always was popular with the unthinking mob, just as the pretty face in life attracts more attention than the strong one; yet there never was any question about which possessed the real beauty. Strength of character will carry farther than any grace of regularity.

And just here, while I am insisting that figures and faces shall show character, it may be worth while to say that not all figures, not all pictures, are to be judged by this standard. The kind of drawing which gives the realistic appearance is sometimes called naturalistic drawing; but there is also classic or academic drawing that may be extremely graceful and fill space decoratively with no great attempt at strength of characterization. Baudry's ceiling pieces in the Opera House at Paris are of this stamp. The figures are half Greek, half Italian, but exceedingly well-drawn and well-placed. So, too, the gods and goddesses by Boucher and Fragonard are not to be tried by the realistic law. They are figures found in no man's land, and have faces beaming with mirth, or, if you please, a trifle silly with laughter; but for all that they form charming decorations for panel and ceiling. Watteau, Pater, and Lancret you may think frivolous again, but consider that there may be character even in frivolity; and Alfred Stevens may strike you as a man-milliner in paint, and yet no

modern ever painted silks and satins with such a fine swing of the brush and such charming color. We are not to forget the merely decorative. It is possible for painting to look quite beautiful though meaning little as narrative, and counting for little as characterization.

CHAPTER VII

PORTRAIT PAINTING

THE portraits by the old masters, as those by more modern painters, may and often do include the half-length or whole-length of the figure; but, of course, their chief interest as portraiture lies in the heads. The hands, the arms, the shoulders, the whole figure, are sometimes generalized, or merely suggested instead of completed, or made up from memory, or taken from different models; but the face is, or should be, in modern work at least, peculiar to some one person. This we may suppose forms the history of an individual which, if associated with other individuals in a group, might make an historical picture such as Velasquez's "Surrender of Breda," or David's "Coronation of Josephine"; but standing alone it becomes the portrait—a branch of art which must be spoken of separately.

There is a Greek myth going about the world which gives the supposed origin of portraiture, and also incidentally of sculpture. Butades, a Greek potter, had a daughter who had a lover. One night, as they all sat by the firelight, the daughter outlined with charcoal on the wall the silhouette of her lover,

and afterward induced her father to fill it in with wet clay and model the face. From that, say the Greeks, portraiture and sculpture were developed. Unfortunately for the pretty story the Egyptians and Chaldeans made stone portraits before Greek walls were built or Greek girls had lovers. A certain style of portraiture began with the first man who carved with a flint a sandstone block into a rude-shaped idol. It was not our style of portraiture, by any means. Our teaching has led us to associate a portrait with an exact facial likeness, but that was not the teaching of the ancients. There are different kinds of portraits scattered through galleries and museums, and we may as well begin by examining them.

The earliest portraits made in Egypt were of a realistic nature—that is, the Egyptians cut in granite and painted upon walls, as accurately as they could, the likenesses of their people, their kings, and their gods. Most of them were intended for the tomb and the temple; and during the first four dynasties there was much of this work. Later on in Egyptian history, however, the realistic art was succeeded by a conventional art which makes up the bulk of what remains to us. This conventional art made portraits, too; but they were ideal, not realistic. I do not now mean "ideal" in any modern sense. The Egyptian ideal was an abstraction—a gathering together of race attributes, heroic attributes, kingly attributes.

XXV.—VELASQUEZ, Infanta Maria Theresa, Vienna Gallery.

When a Rameses commanded a portrait of himself to be made, his exact features and expression were not given, except in a vague way. It was an Egyptian face with a calm smile, great dignity and repose, and a serenity that not even the gods could ruffle. All the kingly qualities were there; it had majesty, wisdom, power, austerity; and yet it was only a type, and not the likeness of the king himself. All that made it his, as distinguished from any other Pharaoh, was his name cut on the base or pilaster. When he died his successor sometimes had the dead king's name chiselled from the statue and his own name put in its place.

This ideal portraiture was not confined to Egypt. Assyrian art is full of it. There has yet to be discovered in all the countless bas-reliefs of Assyria a distinctly individual portrait. There are but two faces, one with a beard, and one without a beard. The king is told from his followers only by size, position, the richness of his robe, and the inscriptions that accompany. We have no exact likeness of Assur-banipal or Shalmanezer, or any other Assyrian potentate.

The great bulk of Greek portrait sculpture before Phidias repeated the same thing. An abstraction was given—that is, the attributes and features typical, not of any one Greek, but of the Greek race. Pliny tells us that athletes when once victorious in the games were awarded an ideal statue in the Olym-

pic grove; and when thrice victorious a portrait statue. But what did a Greek with his race liking for ideals mean by a portrait? We cannot conclude that it meant the same thing to him that it does to us. It is true that after the time of Alexander Greek art became more realistic than ever before, but it was hardly our realism. The Hellenic artist was more or less idealistic from beginning to end. When he attempted the portrait he always gave the ideal figure, and he made the face ideal, too, with some exceptions. The heads of Alexander, for example, are merely Greek types, with the exception of a fulness over the eyes and a brushing up of the hair from the forehead—peculiarities which were no doubt characteristic of the man. The sculptors doubtless made the heads from memory, taking the Greek ideal as a foundation, and giving a few striking features to distinguish them as representations of Alexander. The so-called iconic portraits of Homer and Anacreon belong in the same category. They were portraits not so much of individual Greeks as of ideal poets with such qualities of type as poets were likely to possess. All the portraits of the philosophers, generals, and orators of Greece, with the exception of the late ones, were largely of this same kind, with here and there a feature that possibly belonged to the original. They were neither realistic nor purely ideal, but half-way between, or semi-ideal.

This second kind of portraiture was not char-

XXVI.—TITIAN, Young Englishman. Pitti, Florence.

acteristic of Greece alone, but of Rome; and yet, side by side with it in late Greco-Roman times, there began to show a realistic art that left generalizations, so far as the face was concerned, and tried to reproduce the exact features. If you recall the face of Julius Cæsar, with its sharp nose and chin, thin lips, hollow cheeks, and sunken eyes, you will understand what I mean by the realistic portrait. It is not a generic type or a Roman ideal, but the literal rendering of peculiar features. It is the face of an individual.

All through the Rome of the Cæsars the realistic portrait existed, but it was not unalloyed by the ideal, as you may see by a glance at the busts of Augustus, Nero, and Tiberius. Realistic portraiture never held complete sway until long after the Roman, the Mediæval, and the Gothic ages had passed away and the Early Renaissance began. Then Donatello and his school in sculpture, Botticelli, Mantegna, Dürer, and Van Eyck in painting, began the portrayal of men and women precisely as they saw them; and the result was a strong, realistic portraiture which has remained with us ever since.

Now all the portraits of the last four hundred years are real enough in the sense of a likeness to an individual; but they are far from being all alike in point of view or manner of treatment. They all render peculiarities of feature, coloring, or dress; but a portrait should reveal something more than the

texture of a man's skin, the coloring of his hair and eyes, or the style of his clothing. It is true that man is a good animal and represents physical life, but it is also true that he is a thinker and represents intellectual life. He shows intelligence not only in words and acts, but in looks; and it is necessary that the painter should reveal that intelligence in his portrait. But there are many painters of many kinds, and the result is there are many portraits showing many different views of humanity.

To start with there is the work of the man who thinks the aim of portrait painting is the exact imitation of the physical man, and that the best way to get a likeness of him is to portray wrinkles, eyelashes, and three-days-old beard. This is the small and narrow view of the man, the indulgence in petty truths at the expense of great ones. It sometimes calls for applause from the multitude, because people always wonder at minute work. But such workmanship is merely a piece of mechanical dexterity not unlike the engraving of the Lord's Prayer on a ten-cent piece. Neither exploit is art, nor anything other than a trick of the hand. A man's portrait is no more valuable for its wrinkles than the sun for its spots. Both can be overlooked by the person who is seeking greater truths. Denner and a host of other painters followed this minute style of work; but their portraits are only gallery curiosities to-day, and were never anything else at any time. Any

painter who tries to rival the detail of the photograph may be safely set down as mistaken as to the province of art. Art is not an imitation but an interpretation of nature—"nature seen through the prism of an emotion," as Alfred Stevens has put it, rather than nature seen through a microscope. The microscopic has never taken high rank as art.

Far above the Denners comes a second kind of portrait painter who still paints more of the physical than the mental in his sitter, but he does so in a broad, elevated and dignified manner. He does not fathom the inmost recesses of the mind, and indeed it is not his business to do so. He does not read the hidden character of the man, any more than the so-called mind-readers. But he sees his sitter as a substantial piece of physical life, breathing, living, exulting in animal spirits, a creature surrounded by light and color and air and belonging to all of them. Moreover he sees him as a whole, a complete person unspotted by emphasized wrinkles and petty deformities. The salient points of physical existence, such as bulk, body, and the unity of the color masses, he draws and paints in a broad, free way.

This class of portrait painters includes a great many living men and a large number of the old masters. Frans Hals is an excellent example of it, and for painting the purely human he never had a superior. Almost all the portraits by Terburg, Moroni, Antonello da Messina, and even Holbein and Velas-

quez belong in this category; though with each one of these men we find examples that go beyond the merely physical and belong with the highest and the best portraiture.

This last class of portraiture is, as you have doubtless anticipated, that which not only gives the physical but also the mental and perhaps the moral character. And just here is a point over which the painter and the public agree to disagree. The painter assures us (in words not always gentle) that he has nothing to do with the mental and moral nature of the man. He is to paint only his pictorial appearance, only what he sees before him. As for this subtle analysis of a man's character, this shrewd discernment of a nobleman, a poet, a statesman, or a murderer, the painter thinks it is more in the spectator's imagination than in the picture.

Well, the painter is right; but the public is not entirely wrong. The difference may be largely one of words—a great many differences are. It is true that the painter has nothing to do with the man's life or history, his achievement or his lack of achievement aside from what shows in the physical make-up; but can it be doubted that what a man has done or is doing, what he thinks, what he endures, what he enjoys, what he suffers, will somehow make its impress upon his face and be an index to his character for those who are keen-sighted enough to see it? We have heard of reading character by hands or clothing

XXVII.—REMBRANDT, Elizabeth Bas. Rijks Museum, Amsterdam.

or movements, but after all can it not be read best in the human face?

The face is the mirror of the thoughts, the beliefs, the passions, the emotions. Certainly the man of books will after years of study wear the student's thoughtful expression, the pastor of the flock will finally show the ministerial air; the soldier the martial bearing; the servant, subserviency; and the beggar mock humility. We may not always see these features obtruding upon us in actual life. If we try to guess at people's occupations in a crowd we are often puzzled. But that may be because we are not good readers of the human face. There is precisely where the portrait-painter comes in with his training and experience. He has become an expert in just that very thing. It would be strange, indeed, if after studying faces all his life he should not see more in them than we who merely glance at them casually to recognize an acquaintance, and sometimes have difficulty even in doing that.

Let us not misunderstand about this. I do not mean that the painter sees more scholarship, more poetry, more humility, or more brutality in the faces; but merely that he sees the physical conformation more completely than we do. This for the same reason that a landscape-painter sees more in a blue sky, a shaft of light, or a single tree than one who is not a landscape-painter. There is usually at the

dining-room entrance of each one of the large New York hotels an attendant who takes the hats of people entering the room. Without checks or numbers he seldom fails to return every man his own hat. Now he does not do so by saying to himself, "That man looks like a judge, this one like a merchant, and this one like a physician"; but by noticing some peculiarity of face or figure characteristic of each man. The result of his practice is that he has a very superior knowledge of physiognomy.

Just so with the portrait-painter. When a man comes into his studio he does not look at him in solemn study and mentally conclude, "You look as though you might be a professor; I'll give you a thoughtful brow." He simply studies the man's physique, tries to imagine him as he would look in a picture, and finally puts down his imagination on canvas. Of course he emphasizes the marked features just as a caricaturist exaggerates them. Sometimes the caricature resembles the man more strongly than a photograph, and sometimes the painter gets "that thoughtful look," or "that nervous quality" more pronounced than in the original. He sees abnormal or protrusive features in the sitter (such features as thin lips, high cheek bones, delicate nostrils, overhanging brows, all become a little abnormal in people who have done things) and he seizes upon them, painting them strongly because they appeal to him strongly. The result is the peculiar look

that betrays the character of the man appears in the painting. And that, too, perhaps without the painter's thinking about it consciously, or doing anything other than portraying strongly what he saw before him.

That is about all there is to the character portrait. The painter is right in his contention. He cannot go beyond the surface. If a great statesman looks like a butcher, it is his business to paint him as he looks. Of course much depends upon the way in which he sees his sitter, whether he produces a good portrait or not. According to Mr. Henry James, "Art is a point of view, and genius a way of looking at things." The definition has been well-worn, but still has some force. Your little men in portraiture see little things, wrinkles and buttons and cocked hats; they paint them in a small way, and are sometimes, but mistakenly, referred to as "realists." Your great men see the larger and more important things, physical life and characteristic features; they paint them in a large way and are sometimes, but just as mistakenly, referred to as "idealists." The difference is largely one of degree—of view-point. Denner could find nothing in the face of a sitter but freckles and wrinkles; but Titian could see a physical and intellectual being possessed of a personality and a distinct character.

As for the distorted meaning of the word "realism," by which people usually mean the painting

of peanuts and postage-stamps to be picked up, a truth is no truer because it is petty and easily discerned. A man's character, be it true or false, is just as true and real as his nose or his forehead, and the great portrait-painters like Titian and Rembrandt were just as realistic in a large way as Denner, Dou, Meissonier, and all the little men of the paint brush were in a small way. There is a characteristic look or appearance that distinguishes a man from his fellows, and that is precisely the important portrait-truth that the painter should see and portray. He is not to put character in a man, not to make him look noble when he has no nobility about him; but he is to make the most of what he finds by seizing upon the prominent features. This, in the hands of genius, produces the highest kind of portraiture, best seen perhaps in such men as Titian, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Rubens—in short the great painters of all time.

And please notice that the great painters of all time did not despise painting the portrait, that they really took pleasure in painting it, and that their great masterpieces are portraits. There is a notion prevalent in unintelligent circles that portrait-painting is a perfunctory affair, a following of the model requiring no great imagination, a kind of work not to be mentioned in the same breath with historical or ideal creation. Do not believe any such nonsense. A portrait by Titian (Plate 26) or Rem-

XXVIII.—PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA (?), Unknown Lady. Pitti, Florence.

brandt (Plate 27) is about the best that painting has to offer us.

Let me suggest also that in studying the great portraits you do not allow yourself to be bothered by the "ugly" or the "handsome." You may think that Mantegna's men and Piero della Francesca's women (Plate 28) are "ugly," because they are not sweet-faced like the saints of Perugino; but consider what superb force and truth they have, and how nobly they represent their clime and time and race! They are wonderful revelations of character—epitomes of the best in the Italian people. There is very little in nature that is "ugly" when seen in its proper environment.

And again, do not allow yourself to be worried by costumes that you may think hideous because different from our own—the ruffs of Antonio Moro, the brocades of Mierevelt, the hoop-skirts of Velasquez. If you will forget their form and look at them merely as color in a decorative pattern, you will see how very beautifully they answer their purpose in filling space and pleasing the eye. The three children's portraits by Velasquez in the Vienna Gallery, in spite of the balloon-quality of their nether garments, are the most superb pieces of painting in all the world (Plate 25). The portrait does not consist in the pretty face and the tailor-made suit, otherwise the fashion plates of the women's journals would have a monopoly of that branch of art.

Of course there is danger in too great a display of either costume or color. The painter may make the picture of these, combined with sunlight and *plein air*; but in doing so he may lose the portrait. Many a modern painter is open to that very criticism. He overlooks the fact that in portraiture the subject is more exacting than in any other branch of painting. The identity and personality of the sitter must be preserved. A free personal interpretation, such as Delacroix or Millet gave with their figure pictures, will not answer. Some feeling must be put in the work, some sympathy with the model must be apparent; but too great a license may falsify the likeness and romance the character.

Again, there is or should be a limit to the use of gorgeous accessories. Too many splendid furnishings may rob the king himself of importance. There is a nice balance to be maintained in portraiture; and because they maintained the balance exactly and perfectly is perhaps one reason why we keep harking back to Titian and Velasquez as the great masters. They do not reproduce the sitter with photographic exactness and nothing more; neither do they leave him struggling in a fog-bank of color, light, and silken splendor. They have a knowledge of limitations and are gifted with a sense of proportion.

CHAPTER VIII

GENRE PAINTING

We have not yet finished with the human figure in art. There are other phases of it than the portrait and the historical scene—phases that you will not see too much of in the Italian galleries, but which will be greatly in evidence in the Dutch, English, and French collections, especially among the modern pictures. I mean now the genre painting—something that we must labor over in illustration if we would define.

In historical painting the figure is of primary importance; and the landscape, the room, the street, the court, or wherever the figure may be placed, is usually a subordinate background, a mere setting or framework. In genre painting the figure is usually reduced in size so that it sometimes plays no more of a part than a house or an animal or a spot of color; and the scene is painted as a whole without the sacrifice of any part. That distinction may prove suggestive, but it is not by any means definite or final. It is the distinction between man as a mere human being and man as an individual.

There are those who understand by genre painting the painting of the commonplace; but that, again, hardly describes it. Meissonier was at one time considered the prince of genre painters, as Terburg before him; and yet, in a sense, neither of them painted commonplace subjects. In fact they were rather elegant seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cavaliers and burghers. If we mean by "commonplace" the ordinary events or intimate scenes of every-day life, as distinguished from scenes of historic or national importance, we may be nearer the truth and yet still be in something of a mental tangle.

Perhaps we shall understand its meaning better if we try to define its scope or extent. Genre painting, then, includes pictures of interiors, street scenes, houses, with figures; it deals with *fêtes*, stories, domestic events, incidents of high or low life; it shows manners, usages, and every-day occupations, and is, in measure, an illustration of the social life of the people. It does not include the portrait or the landscape or the animal piece as such; nor does it properly include still-life or flower painting, though these are usually produced by genre painters.

Dealing, as it does, largely with contemporary events and familiar life, genre painting seems to imply something done from the model—something realistic in appearance. Such an inference is correct enough, but is subject to some exceptions. As a rule

XXIX.—PIETER DE HOOCH, Interior. Munich Gallery.

its producers do paint what they see before them oftener than what they fancy or imagine. Actual life being the theme models are easily obtainable; and the painter, working directly from the fact, tries to give his picture the look of reality.

This very feature, to which you are perhaps readily drawn in the gallery, has been cast in the face of the genre painters as a reproach. The historical painters —the grave academicians who have never had any compunctions of conscience about casting the first stone—have been kind enough to say that the genre painters are mere imitators of set forms, that they have no great knowledge or imagination and do no thinking, that they work entirely from the fingers and gain effects by bright color, flashy textures, and dexterous manipulation of the brush. And to tell the truth there is something in that assertion. The genre painters, being put to their wits for answer, have abused the historical painters for concocting dreams on canvas; for picturing people they have never seen, and reciting events they have never known, for distorting the truth of natural appearance, and for neglecting the truly poetic in the humble things of every-day life. And to tell a further truth there is something in that assertion. It is an odd chapter in art history that does not contain a quarrel of some sort.

But genre painting is not wholly an imitation of given models, nor a case of mere technical fire-

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works. The little incidents of life—family groups in interiors, tavern scenes, street processions, court squares with huckster stalls and passing people—are as much history as Xenophon and the Ten Thousand or Napoleon at Marengo, though they may not appear so important in the eyes of the political world. They are the events of social life, and as such are entitled to consideration. Time was when history was no more than the biographies of kings, but today we are beginning to think it means the sociological doings of all the people.

Moreover, these domestic subjects offer abundant opportunity for the display of imagination and pictorial poetry. It is true that the painters usually do not strive for those qualities. There is no great imagination in Pieter de Hooch's interiors (Plate 29) or Meissonier's readers or Alfred Stevens' fashionable women. The skill of the artist is predominant, and an artistic feeling for light or color is about all there is to the picture. But the fisher-folk of Israels, the workers of Bonvin, or the children of Chardin or Gainsborough are full of true poetry, and are quite as important contributions to art and life as pictures of more pretentious size. The value of sentiment is not appraised by the extent of either verse or canvas. A single couplet by Burns or a single spader or shepherdess by Millet is worth a volume by Tupper, or a whole wall panel by Kaulbach or Cornelius.

XXX.—MORLAND, The Halt.

As for skill the genre painting requires just as much as any other painting, and is subject to just as severe criticism from the public. The mob that surges through the Louvre on Sundays may pass uncriticised Couture's "Romans of the Decadence," because it knows little about the subject; but let a genre painting of a concierge sitting in a doorway appear, and every shopkeeper and cabman in the throng will be able to tell you whether it is true or not. The genre is not to be despised because it is small in scale or incidental in subject. And again let me say that a picture should not be measured by size, nor the remoteness of its subject from our knowledge; but by the life that is in it and the life which it is able to awaken in us.

Of course this painting of familiar life is no new thing invented in modern times to please a fashionable world. Indeed, it is very old. The ancient Egyptians pictured the every-day events of their life, but not in a manner distinct from their more formal historical presentations. In Greece there was an art of the grotesque that approximated modern genre; and in later times the small things in Greek and in Roman life all found their way upon wall and panel. After Rome there was little of it for a thousand years; and then, at the end of the Renaissance, it came into notice again with the pictures of the Venetian Bassani and their contemporaries. At the north almost all the art of the little Dutchmen belongs in

this department. In fact the Netherlanders were the first who gave definite rank and importance to the picture of humble life and commonplace story. Brouwer, Teniers, Terburg, Steen, Van der Meer of Delft, De Hooch, Van Mieris, all painted the small panel with the small subject, but often in a very large way. And very honestly. They were not at all ashamed of their home life.

It was the influence of the Dutchmen that had something to do with making "the picture with a story" in English art. Hogarth, Wilkie, Morland (Plate 30), and hosts of lesser lights such as Mulready, took up the humble theme, painting it in a peculiarly English manner. Even figure painters like Gainsborough used it occasionally and effectively; though most of the English painters aspired to the historical picture of exalted theme — with which, however, they never succeeded.

The French, too, have always been painters of the figure, though much genre has come out of Paris. In early years Watteau, Pater, and Lancret produced a most charming quality of small art; and after them Chardin, Fragonard, and Greuze depicted themes of city and country life that at least received a warm welcome from the people. When David and Classicism came at the beginning of the French Revolution, these domestic themes passed under a cloud. They were not forceful enough for people in the throes of revolution, and David rather

led the artistic mind toward scenes of Greek and Roman heroism. Genre painting came to the surface again with Romanticism when Napoleon had made his exit and France had once more turned to the plough and the spindle; and the chief form it took upon itself under Romanticism was the portrayal of Oriental life.

The picturing of the Orient is quite a distinct branch of genre. In fact, it is hardly genre at all, if compared with the interiors of Steen or the peasants of Ostade. It has apparently impinged at times upon figure- and landscape-painting, and yet it has shown truly enough the manners and customs of the every-day East without any heroic pose or grandiloquence, except perhaps in the hands of painters like Benjamin-Constant. Decamps, with his Turkish courts and schools, his bashi-bazouks, camels, winding caravans, and shining minarets, saw with romantic eyes perhaps; but he nevertheless had the point of view of the genre painter, and painted the scene "all of a piece," regarding his figures more for color and light than as figures, and the landscape more as an envelope than a setting. Marilhat was of the same cast of mind. He did many scenes from Egyptian life, was in love with the East, and used to sign himself "Marilhat the Egyptian." Some of the works of these men, with those of Fromentin, painter and critic, are to be seen in the upper galleries (Thierry Collection) of the Louvre in Paris. In more modern

times Gérôme, Bargue, and Huguet have used the East as a storehouse of properties useful in pictorial representations, and with more or less success.

At about the same time that the painters of the Orient were flourishing there came into existence what has been called the "peasant genre" of Millet, Courbet, Breton, and others. Perhaps the only thing that puts it in the genre classification is the subject. In treatment these men were really figure painters, though they did scenes from intimate life that are unmistakenly genre in character. After a long period of viewing the peasant with indifference the public gradually awakened to the fact that he was really quite picturesque, and Millet's Sowers, Gleaners, and Woodsmen came into popular favor. Of course when the subject proved attractive there were plenty of painters to adopt it. As a result the peasantry of France has crowded the walls of the Salons for the last thirty years. Bastien-Lepage was one of the best of the younger men, and L'Hermitte, Lerolle, Dagnan-Bouveret have all produced a good quality of peasant genre, but always with some reminder of figure painting about it.

This is true of the military genre of Meissonier (Plate 31). It is figure painting in the little; historical work on a microscopic scale. No doubt Meissonier got much of his initiative from such Dutchmen as Terburg and Dou. He liked their technique, but not their subject. He cared little for humble

XXXI.—MEISSONIER, The Sergeant's Portrait.

life, and never painted boors or kitchen interiors or pots and pans, preferring the courtier in powdered wig, the soldier in his uniform, the scholar surrounded by his library. For these fine figures he rather sacrificed the rest of his picture, which is the reason for saying he was a figure painter in little. Later on he gave the proof of this in his Napoleonic battle pictures, which are historical pictures, and yet are little larger in size than his other works. Everything he did was diminutive in scale. He saw the world through the small end of an opera-glass, and was a painter great in little things. Whistler used to sneer at him and call his pictures "snuff-box painting"; but they were more than that. He was a fine craftsman, but perhaps not a great artist.

There were a number of painters who followed Meissonier in the military genre; and a still larger body who accepted his technique and applied it to fashionable life, boulevard life, gay life, low life. Moreover, with these followers the work became more genre-like, more materialistic. The figure came to have little more importance than a rug, a tapestry, a silk dress, or a piece of Empire furniture. Subjects began to be painted for their color, light, or texture; and, finally, to show how clever the painter was in handling the brush. In 1853 and 1855 the French Minister of Fine Arts publicly protested against this realistic genre as tending to do away with the ideal and the historical; but the protest

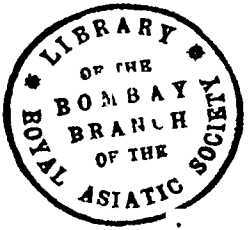
was unheeded. Realism was in the air, and the intimate life upon canvas expressed the gossipy spirit of the age. People for a time really believed that the millinery effects of Toulmouche, Heilbuth, Kämmerer, and others were great art. Then the tapestry, rug, and mirror pictures of Louis Leloir, and the red-robed cardinals of Vibert caught the fancy. Amid all this demonstration of bad taste there were a few who had the good sense to admire the superbly painted fashionable genre of Alfred Stevens.

It is not easy to trace the many ramifications of modern genre painting. It has pervaded all departments of life, told of things in all tenses, and ransacked the four quarters of the globe for the material of the telling. Effort is so individual in these days that it is almost impossible to classify painters by schools or even subjects. Every painter is a searcher after novelty on his own account, and independent of what others may do or think. Impressionism is no exception to this, though the impressionistic brotherhood holds together better than some others. They are regarded as the "outs" in art, and that may have something to do with their unity. Opposition often brings strange people into one camp. As regards genre painting the impressionists long ago adopted it. Manet, Degas, Béraud, Raffaelli, Renoir (Plate 32), Pissarro, have produced it many times with subjects taken from low life and middle life, and with a realism often too true for general acceptance.

The changes in genre painting which I have outlined in France have been repeated with more or less distinctness in Holland, Scandinavia, England, and America. Germany has rather held aloof with an art of its own, but if you visit the modern galleries at Berlin, Dresden, and Munich, you will find them filled with genre pictures. Austria, too, is producing a new and quite astonishing kind of genre. Paris, however, has been the center of art for many years, and the reflection of its doings is seen in other countries. In this age there is a tendency to lose nationality in a universal cosmopolitanism. Painters are now great travellers, and pick up not only subjects but ideas in every land. And the genre picture that tells the manners and customs of foreign people was never in greater demand than at present. That is why every Royal Academy or Society or Salon shows its quota of paintings made in Japan or the South Sea Islands or Egypt or India. If the world continues to grow democratic and cosmopolitan, there is a decided future for genre painting.

The painting of still-life—fruits, flowers, china, pans, pots, dead game—is so closely related to genre painting that it may be spoken of in the same breath. Painters have at all times delighted in painting morsels—scraps of light or color or texture—just for the pure love of manipulating the brush and pleasing the eye with an effect. Teniers was as much

delighted with a brass pot, a stone jug, or a steel breast-plate as Chardin with a decanter of wine and a china cup, or Diaz with a bunch of carnations. In the same way and for a similar reason Vollon painted his yellow pumpkin, as Monet his dead pheasants, and our own Mr. Chase his dead fish on a market table. Such pictures do not "mean" much, if you are seeking a story or a history in the picture; but they mean a great deal if you are clever enough to see in them the love, the verve, the enthusiasm of the painter in his work. They lend themselves to the most delightful of color schemes, and they may reveal the very best quality of feeling and pictorial poetry. There is something to admire in almost every kind of painting, if we have but the eyes to see it.


LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

XXXII.– RENOIR, Young Girls.

CHAPTER IX

THE ANIMAL IN ART

After humanity as a subject in art other things are given place as they are closely or remotely related to man. Naturally, therefore, the animal life about us has come in for some recognition. Indeed, the study of it has been the passion of the present age. Lives of toil have been given to it, libraries of books have been written about it, portfolios and even galleries have been filled with photographs of it. Art has not lagged far behind in this field. The æsthetic view has kept pace with the scientific. From the earliest ages the artist has been beside the historian in recreating the animal in form and color; some of the finest pieces of ancient art represent the dumb brute; and to-day the scientific knowledge of a Cuvier or a Darwin is complemented by the artistic knowledge of a Barye or a Troyon.

And why not animals in art? Why not pictures of cattle and horses and dogs and donkeys? Are they not just as perfect in their way as other forms of life? We have passed that stage of enlightenment that arrogated to the human form all the beauty of the world. We have come to recognize that there is

something more to beauty than proportion, regularity, and symmetry. We now know æsthetic pleasure in strength, movement, relationship, yes, even in awkwardness, clumsiness, and what the world has been pleased to call the ugly. A truth of character, a fitness to a designed end, a proper embodiment of vital energy, may make animal life attractive in spite of classic laws of proportion and academic formulas of what should constitute an ideal.

This is not applicable to the domestic animals alone—the ones that are gentle and patient. The wild beasts of the forest and the desert, even in their brutal strength and cruel ferocity, have about them a something to be admired. Delacroix and Barye have shown it to us in a lion crushing a serpent, and in a jaguar devouring a hare. The idea of such scenes seems repulsive at first, but was not the animal designed for that end, fitted for that purpose? Does not that very act of brutality betray the character of the brute? And is not character the very essence of such art?

For this theory the ancients supplied the practice, and as a rather exceptional thing the Egyptians and Assyrians did such fine things that the moderns, with all their knowledge and facility, have scarcely improved upon them. The great sphinxes of black granite, with their lion's body and king's head, the crouching rams that lined the avenues of Karnak, look like curiously heavy and incomplete sculptures;

but delicacy of cutting would have chipped away that strength of mass which was the very quality the sculptors wished to show. The same largeness in modelling is met with in Assyria; but what strength, what action, what keen artistic sense of character lie in their bas-reliefs? Some of the best of these reliefs are preserved in the British Museum, and there, to this day, the wounded lioness drags herself forward on her forelegs, roaring out defiance at the bowman, the great mastiffs tug and strain at the leash, the ibex and the goat skulk amid the bushes, the wild ass kicks at an imaginary foe in his flight. Superb in life and power are these sculptures of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. People to-day do a more finical, fussy, polished-and-rubbed sort of work than those who lived in the days of Assur-banipal; but it can hardly be called an improvement upon the rendering of animal life.

Even the Greeks, with all their technical skill in sculpture, improved but little upon the Assyrians, though the prancing steeds along the Parthenon frieze are full of power and life. If we may believe Pliny, the painters of animal life in Greece must have been wonderful. He tells us that Apelles painted a troop of cavalry so realistically that other horses neighed at the sight of the picture; and that Protogenes rivalled him by the foam on a dog's mouth, and the wonder in the eye of a startled pheasant. The only facts, however, that we have about

Greek genre painting are to be found in Roman and Pompeian imitations, and they are in no way remarkable.

After Rome and under Early Christianity the animal was used only to illustrate Bible story or as Christian symbolism. The fantastic forms of the Roman world were revised and enlarged, so that a whole kingdom of demons, griffins, and leviathans of monstrous shape came into existence as a terror to evil-doers. Eventually the whole representation passed into the bizarre and was lost in the gold background of Byzantine art.

When life and landscape again came to be studied in the Early Renaissance time the animal was given a share of attention, but it was a very slight share. The flock around St. Joachim's sheepfold was a sorry-looking collection of wooden sheep; and the cows and horses that appeared in the "Adoration of the Magi" were grotesque-looking beasts, with a semi-human expression of countenance, and most astonishing bodies. In sculpture some of the Italians, like Donatello and Verrocchio, were simply superb with their horses; but the painters were in no way remarkable. Raphael's horse was about as wooden as Paolo Uccello's, and even Leonardo used a horse that travelled on his hind legs, in true merry-go-round fashion. The Venetians were much better. Paolo Veronese, for example, painted wonderful dogs, Tintoretto handled all animal life with knowledge and

XXXIII.—TROYON, Cattle and Sheep.

skill, and the Bassani were among the first to paint cows and sheep with a proper appreciation of their purely animal qualities.

The galleries of Italy, and Italian pictures wherever found, have the animal more or less in evidence; but unfortunately people do not often see beyond the figures. The "Flight into Egypt" is remarkable for the pretty face of the young Madonna or the accompanying children; the little donkey is usually not noticed at all. So, again, in the "Adoration of the Magi" it is the people that are seen; few there are who stop to look at the caparisoned steeds, the attendent dogs, the cattle at the manger, though they may be the most telling features of the picture.

At the north the chief merit of the Flemings and Dutchmen in animal representation seems to have been a wearisome fidelity to exterior facts. They never grasped the meaning of brute life like the modern Frenchmen. There are, of course, some exceptions to that statement—Rubens, for example. And then we must not forget that the careful study of both animal life and landscape really began in the Netherlands. Both were emancipated from decorative servitude there, and in both cases a measure of success was reached without any wonderful masterpieces being produced. One hears many rhapsodies over Paul Potter's "Young Bull" at The Hague; but the "Young Bull" is not the last word in art about the bovine family. It is a good piece of hard

drawing which has resulted in a dead museum bull that feigns life with glass eyes and a stuffed body. Cuyp's cattle are much better as smaller, and sharing the interest with landscape; but neither he nor Adrien van de Velde nor Berchem nor Du Jardin ever reached that sympathetic truth of cattle painting attained by such moderns as Troyon (Plate 33) and Jacque, or such contemporary painters as Mols and Bjorck — to go far afield in Scandinavia for illustration. The Dutch were perhaps too literal in their cattle painting, getting little more from the representation in art than is obvious to the ordinary observer in nature.

Aside from Oudry and Desportes the animal did not flourish in French art until about the time of Romanticism. The classicists, under the leadership of David, had little use for anything so inelegant as dumb, driven cattle; and a horse was only a rearing platform upon which a hero posed for his picture. It was probably not until Géricault came, with his passion for the horse, that the animal became of importance in art. The sleekness, the swiftness, the beauty of movement in the horse he painted many times and with excellent results. He admired also the brutal strength of such beasts as lions and tigers, as his many drawings in the Louvre attest to this day. It was this admiration of Géricault for the purely physical, for the graceful action of the horse, for the "jaw on four paws," as the

lion has been described, that was handed down in influence from Géricault to Delacroix, to Decamps, and to that superb worker in bronze, Barye, who probably carried it further and with better results than any artist of modern times.

Delacroix was a naturalistic rather than an academic draftsman, and he very often slurred line to gain an effect of unity, mass, life, and motion. With no subjects did he do this more than with lions, tigers, and horses. His horse is a bit artificial and rather melodramatic in action. He never quite understood that animal, but, probably with less study, he caught the true character of the tiger. A snapping, snarling, yellow-eyed mass of energy, willowy as a serpent and just as treacherous, Delacroix felt the sense of power in his long body and ponderous muscles, the fascination of his skulking, stealthy tread, and the crushing blow of his enormous paw. These he gave on canvas with such energy, such telling effects of color and motion, that we instantly feel the force of the impression.

In such a case slurred drawing—any kind of drawing—seems justifiable. Dozens of painters have given tiger anatomy better than Delacroix, but what one of them ever gave such tiger life! They frittered away the character of the beast in attention to the petty details of a glossy coat or the minutiæ of eyes, mouth, and claws. Delacroix went straight at the salient points and was content with an effect, re-

gardless of the means whereby it was attained. In the same way Decamps and Fromentin gave to the camel his stilt-like legs, his spare body and long swinging tread, to the donkey his quick step and patient look, to the Arab horse his sleekness of limb and dashing action. They were all seeking the essentials that describe rather than the details that bewilder—they were seeking the character of the animal.

This grasp of character seems to me the very essence of animal painting. Each animal of the field or of the forest has a distinct peculiarity which shows not only in its physical contour, but in its habits, disposition, movements; and if these qualities be truly given there will be a beauty about the beast. Consider the frightened, apprehensive look of the hyena, his bunched body and restless, shuffling tread; the sharp keen look of the fox, his cocked ears, open mouth and light footfall; the long, slim nose and bright eyes of the Scotch stag hound, his spare body and great loping spring; and almost in the same family, notice the distinct nature of each kind. It is the clumsiness of the elephant, the ferocity of the tiger, the docility and mild indolence of the cow that in each case makes for the nature of the beast. Every species of the animal kingdom, whether domestic or wild, has a distinct character marking it apart; and whether that character comes to us in art with weakness or force is just in proportion as it is discerned and recorded by the painter.

XXXIV.—JACQUE, Sheep.

Now it is worth while noticing that animal character may be of two kinds. There is the true character given animals by nature; and there is a false character occasionally given them by men when they seek to poetize or paint them. The true character I take to be just what the name "animal" implies. We speak of the "brute creation," and what do we mean by that if not something distinctly lower than humanity, a something not of mental, moral, or æsthetic nature, but of physical and animal organization? Without either the logical or the emotional faculty to any great extent, animal character is largely a result of physical conditions—a something in direct opposition to man, whose physical nature is supposed to be controlled by his reasoning powers.

I am aware that there are cases of exceptional intelligence in animals, but because a dog may be trained to walk on his hind legs or a pig to play cards is no argument for the inference that it is the nature of dogs to walk on two legs, or the nature of pigs to gamble; and any painter who sought to give such a nature to either dog or pig would simply be falsifying the character. The exceptions do not make the rule. It is the general run of the race that gives the stamp of the race, and where one picks the exception he may be specially true and yet generally false.

Sir Edwin Landseer is an example of one who has falsified the animal kingdom by giving it too much

reasoning power and emotional nature. He has prettified and humanized the dog until the animal of him lies only in his hair. His strength, ferocity, and pure dog-like nature have all gone out in sad eyes, facial expressions, and attitudes that ape humanity. The attempt of the painter in such pictures as "Dignity and Impudence," or "The Wounded Knight," was to be humorous or pathetic by telling a story proper only to mankind. The dog in either case is put in a false face and made to play at being human. And this is what I should call giving the false character of the animal.

On the contrary, if we turn from Landseer's dogs to the great yellow hounds of Velasquez we shall find that the Spaniard accepted the animal as an animal, without any sentimentality or funny caricature, and simply because he was worth painting for his true nature. His was the purely physical portrait of the dog, different in kind, but not in method of treatment from the hounds of Theseus that Shakespeare tells us were

> "Bred out of the Spartan kind;
> So flewed, so sanded; and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
> Crook-kneed and dew-lapped like Thessalian bulls."

In both Shakespeare and Velasquez you have the true canine character without distortion. There is

no human element about it, though it may have a certain intelligence, approximating our own, as we may see in the shepherd dogs of Troyon and Jacque. These long, wiry-looking beasts understand their duty thoroughly, and there is very acute comprehension in the sharp ear and eye, and the head always turning to the shepherd for instruction by hand or voice. It seems to be intelligence coupled with physical and animal qualities, but it is not the abstract half-human intelligence that Landseer gave to the shepherd dog.

All the modern painters who have had success with the animal have not tried in any way to disguise the beast in him. Van Marcke, Mauve, Mols, Liljefors—even the somewhat overrated Rosa Bonheur —have dealt largely with the material side, believing that the creatures of the earth needed no apology from the painter for the place they occupy in the plan of the world. Sometimes they require apology for the place they occupy on canvas. For success in animal painting has been vouchsafed to only a few. A popular success has been accorded such painters as Verboeckhoven with his sheep, as, before him, Wouverman with his horses, but neither of them deserved it. Verboeckhoven was a most persistent recorder of the tomb-stone- and porcelain sheep, and could sometimes paint a very fair sheepskin; but for portraying the character of the animal he was never in the same class with men like

Millet or Jacque or Mauve or Segantini. The last-named was somewhat mannered in method, and Mauve was often lacking technically, but by one means or another they succeeded in giving the feeling of life.

In our own country some years ago Audubon made a great reputation as a painter of birds, but his success was more ornithological than artistic. His drawings are faithful records of fact, but as art they are not to be compared with the black-and-white illustrations of Charles Livingston Bull that appear from time to time in the American magazines. Perhaps the ablest painter of birds and wild animals at the present day is the Swedish artist, Bruno Liljefors. His ducks and geese and pheasants are life-like to a startling degree; and his painting of such animals as foxes trotting through the woods or jumping over fences is worthy of the highest praise, not only for its originality of theme but for its skill in execution. An American painter of high rank, Winslow Homer, occasionally does something of this kind (Plate 35) that is comparable in its strength and beauty to the work of Liljefors.

Aside from the recording of character in beast and bird there is, or should be, a decorative motive behind all animal painting. Cattle, for instance, apart from indolence, or cud-chewing, or stamping flies, or standing in pools of water, often have beautiful color, with forms that lend themselves to im-

From a photograph. Copyright, 1895, by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

XXXV.—WINSLOW HOMER, Winter. Pennsylvania Academy, Phila.

pressive drawing. Troyon (as also Willem Maris), saw in the shadowed sides of Holland cattle spots of red that were as deep and as fine in quality as old mahogany; and his barnyard chickens, painted in huddled groups at feeding time, are often charming combinations of variegated hues.

Just so with the horses that Degas has shown us on the race track, and that Besnard has painted wading in the water, or moving along the red hills under the bright sunlight of Morocco. They are not only beautiful in form and graceful in movement, but they have hue and texture, and make up decorative patterns on canvas quite as worthy to be framed in gold and hung in the drawing-room as pictures of landscape or of humanity. Why not? We may arrogantly take away all reason from the brute, but we cannot change the beauty of the leopard's spots, nor deny the serpentine grace of his finely modelled body. The animal has and holds a distinct place in nature. Why not a distinct place in art?

CHAPTER X

LANDSCAPE AND MARINE PAINTING

A KNOWLEDGE of landscape seems to have been about the last thing arrived at by man. Hills, woods, and plains have been his dwelling place in all generations, but not until modern times did he study them or try pictorially to understand them. He believed they were all made for his material needs—the hills for fortresses, the woods for timber, the meadows for cattle and agriculture. He thought them gay or sad as he was gay or sad; he twisted them, worked them, destroyed them; but when before the fifteenth century did he ever think them beautiful in themselves and independent of his own mood or condition?

In art the landscape has been the very latest word, the most modern subject with which the painter's brush has dealt; and yet, as a matter of fact, it has existed from the beginning. That contradiction may be explained by saying that it was, at first, merely a background for figures. All ancient painting was figure painting, and landscape was poor trumpery unless it pieced out the story about the man, or helped the decorative quality of the picture. At best it was merely a symbol and not the apparent thing. One

tree did service for a forest, a round line represented a mountain top, three zigzags symbolized a river or an ocean. Even the Greeks employed this shorthand in their vase paintings (though they also produced a more realistic background in their wall frescoes), and after Rome the Christians accepted the tradition, or at least produced a symbolic landscape of their own. Thus in the tenth century a blue tree with red apples, a snake wound about it, a man on one side and a woman on the other, with four zigzag lines about the whole, symbolized the Garden of Eden, the Four Rivers, the Temptation, and the Fall. The coloring of these landscapes was generally arbitrary, not natural; there were no shadows, no relief, no perspective, no sky, no sunlight.

When Giotto and the Lorenzetti at Sienna came, this symbolic landscape began to totter. They tried to introduce something truer to nature in sky, trees, and hills, but were always hampered by the importance of their figures. This is true of all Early Renaissance painting. The landscape, however fine, never got beyond a background. Even with Perugino (Plate 36), Leonardo, and Raphael the trees were of the willow-switch variety, the rocks fantastic, the sky and clouds hard, the distance blue, the foreground walnut-brown. Very beautiful are the landscapes by Costa and Francia at Bologna; they are quite charming in their feeling for space and light, but always commanding figures occupy

the foreground. The Venetians were far ahead of the Florentines and Bolognese in this, and some of the landscapes back of the figures in pictures by Titian, Giorgione, and Moretto are of incomparable excellence; but again the figures absorb the chief attention. This held true until after the time of Giulio Romano. In Giulio's wake came two Romanized Frenchmen, Poussin and Claude Lorraine, who conceived the idea of a landscape that should match the classic figures then produced in the Roman school. If heroic figures, why not heroic landscapes? If men were of Olympian magnificence, why not grandeur in the Olympian mountain, grove, and meadow?

In the hands of Claude the classic Arcadia became something more than a background. His figures were much reduced in size and, though they gave the title to the picture, the greater interest hung upon the landscape. The whole conception was elegant and grandiose (Plate 37). There were long views of hill and valley, sylvan groves, flowing streams, peopled harbors, Corinthian temples, Roman aqueducts, mythological groups; and, of course, the object of it all was to suggest the ideal spot of earth, the former Garden of the Gods. The work was panoramic, slightly theatrical; and yet not devoid of poetry, shrewd knowledge of nature, and considerable skill in execution. Claude was an exceedingly clever artist, and in many ways a remarkable man for his time;

XXXVI.—PERUGINO, Madonna and St. Bernard (detail). S. M. Maddalena, Florence.

but hardly the greatest landscape painter in all art, as some would have us think. And yet he was a leader, and an inaugurator of something new.

Poussin's conception took the same general direction as that of Claude. If anything, it was more limited in resource and conventional in material, though such a superb landscape as the large one in the Salle Carré of the Louvre is not limited in any way. Both of them threw much force into sweeping hill lines and elegant tree-forms; and both of them painted a generalized type of what nature might or could or should be, which was somewhat removed from the real thing.

These two men formed the basis of what is known in art as the classic landscape, and their example, when taken up later on, became known as "the Claude-Poussin tradition." It had a powerful influence in all directions for many years, and, indeed, is not quite forgotten to-day. Many of the Dutchmen—Wynants, Ruisdael, Both—were influenced by it, in spite of the local subjects which they portrayed; in England Wilson and Turner adopted it with modifications; and in France it was taken up anew by the academicians at the time of the French Revolution. But the academicians did not improve it. David used it as a mere background for his Greek figures, while Aligny, Bertin, and others, made of it a beautiful example of select emptiness.

Like all classic art, the classic landscape was ideal,

with no local or individual character. The tree, with that peculiarity about it that marks the oak, the elm, or the pine, was seldom seen. Nature was academized, exalted, expanded, glorified. Of course it became only so much lifeless stage setting. And yet like stage scenery it had a great show of grandeur and magnificence about it. A certain mock-heroism found its way amid the quiet hills and valleys until even the skies and trees and brooks put on an heroic stare. And, after all, it was done with a good deal of skill. The classicists were learned enough in the methods of art, but when they began to turn nature into a stage setting, it became apparent that the learning was there but nature was not. They followed a tradition and produced only a—tradition. What else could have been expected?

About 1825 there came about a revolt from the classic standard. The grand landscape of the academicians, of which there are enough and to spare in every French museum, did not satisfy. It was palpably artificial, bloodless, colorless. The sentiment as well as the form of it was a distortion. The whole conception needed reformation. Those who advocated a revolt—Géricault, Delacroix, and others—were called romanticists, and the new movement they inaugurated was known as Romanticism. It was in reality not so much a reform as a rushing to the other extreme. The classicists had manufactured an ideal tree, perfect in trunk,

XXXVII.—CLAUDE LORRAINE, Landscape.

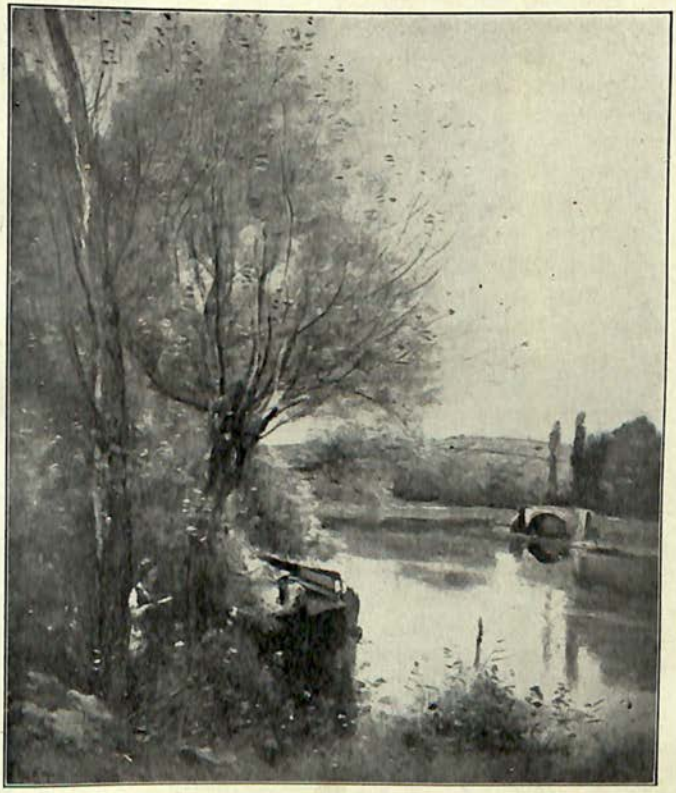
limb, and branch; the romanticists produced a twisted, torn, and ragged tree. Classic skies were serene, streams and lakes were placid, groves were peaceful, temples were majestic; romantic skies were overcast and dismal, waters were dark and mysterious, groves were ghostly haunts of robbers, castles were ruined monuments of tragic history. Again Classicism had insisted upon outline drawing, but Romanticism slurred it in favor of color in patches of solid pigment, was weird in lights, and mysterious in shadows. By throwing its strength into color and *ensemble*, Romanticism sought to convey a sentiment or feeling about nature, rather than the appearance of nature itself.

But for all that Poussin had tried to make of nature something heroic, and Delacroix had given it romance, sadness, weirdness, mystery, it is in reality neither one nor the other. Both men and both schools were distorting trees and hills and skies to make them chime with the sentiment of the stories told. What cares nature for the lonely rider by night, the storm-beaten cavalier on the desert heath, the Knight-Templar carrying away Rebecca from the burning castle? Why should the trees bend like sad willows, the foliage droop, the grass wave dirge-like along the gorge of Roncesvalles when

> "Roland bold and Oliver
> And every paladin and peer
> On Roncesvalles died"?

Both points of view were untrue. Nature has no sentiment. "The last of thy brothers might vanish from the face of the earth and not a needle of the pine branches would tremble." To make nature emotional is to endow it with human characteristics, which it does not possess. The man behind the brush may become emotional, and in his landscape show a sentiment, a poetic feeling, which is perfectly proper; but to make the landscape itself the possessor of a subjective sentiment, as in the work of some of the classicists and romanticists, is quite another thing. The one gives a poetic view such as we associate with the landscapes of Corot; the other simply puts nature in a false face.

Romanticism did not last long. It was too extravagant for permanent acceptance, and yet out of it came good. The generation that followed—the Fontainebleau-Barbizon painters—saw that both Classicism and Romanticism were false in sentiment; and nothing could be more natural than the flight to the forest of Fontainebleau for inspiration. But the flight was not immediate nor hasty. We are told that Constable the Englishman set the pace by exhibiting his "Hay-Wain" in the Salon of 1824, and that he was responsible for the direction Rousseau, Dupré, and others took. It is not probable. Rousseau and Dupré were only twelve years old in 1824, and others of the band were proportionately young. There was no "school" until long after 1824. The French



XXXVIII.—COROT, Landscape.

painters, when they began to paint, went to the Louvre and studied Hobbema and Ruisdael, just as Constable and Gainsborough before them had done in England. It was the study of the Dutchmen for technique, and Fontainebleau forest for a model, that finally produced the celebrated school of French landscapists.

It was not until after 1835 that the new point of view began to make itself apparent. The new landscape was not an academic invention nor a romantic concoction, but a discovery. The painters of Fontainebleau and Barbizon found out that nature was beautiful quite aside from man and his doings —beautiful all by itself, with never a thought of humanity. To them the charm of the hills and valleys, the grandeur of the forest, the lowliness of the meadows, the mists moving over the ponds and marshes, the radiance of dawn and dusk, the flame of sunlight, the passage of companies of clouds, the harmony of light, air, and color, all constituted a new faith, a new religion of art, taken up with sincerity and followed with the ardor of true belief. The nature of the Dutchmen was enlarged and recreated, the true character of landscape was established, and great art was the final result.

There was nothing distorted about this new landscape. Rousseau would have no twisting of nature to suit the sentiment of classic or mediæval heroes. His trees did not grow dignified when Cæsar passed,

nor melancholy when Roland died. They changed only with nature's winds, lights, and colors. He and his contemporaries took nature as they found her, not as they imagined her; but owing to their keen perceptions they found her a great poem—a something they could translate into form and color and thus recreate upon canvas. They were wrapped up in the sentiment of light, air, and color; and unless we look at their work from that point of view we shall fail to understand them as did the people of their day. Theirs was the poetry, not of history nor of romance, but of visual beauties. There was no factitious or literary character about it. It was a reality seen from a poetic point of view, with an enthusiasm and a feeling in its portrayal that made of it poetic art.

Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, Dupré, Daubigny are not easily understood even at the present day. That may be because the majority of their pictures suggest rather than realize. By that I mean they are done broadly with a full free brush which blurs out all the little features and emphasizes the great ones (Plate 38). If you paint leaves you will never see the trees, if you insist upon grass blades you will lose the breadth and depth of the meadows, if you draw every pebble on the beach you will have a collection of stones, but not a seashore. All the Fontainebleau painters painted in a small way at first. It took them years to get over it. Finally they found out

that nature required in art not a classicist to distort, nor a romanticist to exaggerate, nor a copyist to imitate; but a lover to interpret. Then they began their later and nobler style of suggestive treatment. It is hardly worth while to repeat the story of their struggles and disappointments. It is familiar knowledge. Their art is now triumphant and always will remain good art, however much styles may change.

To pass from these men to Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, and others is quite a change, but not necessarily a change for the worse. The impressionists are, in measure, the descendants of Corot and Rousseau. They have pushed the inquiry into nature farther, found a newer view of color and light, and a newer use for pigments—that's all. Impressionism is not a fad. Of course there is extravagance about it. That cannot be helped. But it is an advance on the older art in many ways. It has, for instance, revised the whole scale of light, and, by placing pure color on the canvas in dots and points, created a more realistic effect of sunlight. The scale of shadow has been raised to correspond, and "the colored shadow" has taken the place of the brown, gray, or black tones that were never true of nature at any time. Finally a drawing by masses of color and light has been substituted for rims, outlines and patches; and the atmospheric envelope has been properly portrayed as *colored air.*

In fact, Impressionism, aside from its new point of view, has revised the methods and the materials of art, and that in itself is an achievement. Being a new departure people smile at it, deny its truth of color, fail to grasp its method of drawing, and completely overlook its aim. But when in the history of art was a new movement treated otherwise? Twenty years hence, when our focus and sympathies are properly adjusted, we shall wonder at our blindness in not seeing the really excellent things in Impressionism sooner.

During all the nineteenth century France has led the world in landscape, and the different movements there have met with varying response elsewhere. In our own country, for instance, the Fontainebleau men and their pictures had some weight with Homer Martin, Inness, Wyant, and others; and any of our modern exhibitions will show what influence Claude Monet has had with the younger men. In the same way the Scotch painters have followed Corot, and the Scandinavians Monet. Dutch landscape, with the Maris and others, has been more local perhaps; but in a large sense it, too, has paralleled if not followed the Fontainebleau work.

All this is applicable to marine painting, because pictures of the sea have been and are painted by the very landscape painters we have been considering. The theme, however, is harder to handle, because vaster in volume and less marked in peculiar fea-

XXXIX.—WINSLOW HOMER, Moonlight on Maine Coast.

tures. The sea is like the Alps or Niagara—something that only a universal mind and a master hand can bring effectively to canvas. Knowing the difficulties of producing a picture out of a great reach of sky and water many painters have avoided the open sea, and in its place produced shore scenes, harbor entrances, ships at anchor, and the like. In other words, they have compromised with nature by introducing the human element. This does not produce, has not at least produced, the best quality of sea picture, though it has resulted in a more popular kind of art.

All the early painters painted the harbor entrance with ships and sails and flying flags; but just who was the first painter of the sea would be difficult to say. The first ones to make humanity subordinate to water effect were Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa in Italy, and Simon de Vlieger, Van Goyen, Van de Velde, Cuyp, Backhuisen, Van der Capelle, and others in Holland. They all came about the beginning of the seventeenth century, and their pictures still remain to us, in abundance, on the walls of the Italian, French, and Dutch galleries.

During the nineteenth century marine painting has followed the same course of development as landscape painting, and in France, with Vernet, Delacroix, Dupré, Courbet, Boudin, and Monet, has resulted in very similar effects. It is not even to-day a very conspicuous branch of painting, but by itself

considered it is capable of revealing much, of pleasing much. The wonderful translucent and reflected color that Monet and Alexander Harrison show us in the sea is not more beautiful than the feeling of its vastness as seen in Dupré's work, or the sense of its majestic power as revealed by Winslow Homer (Plate 39). The only difficulty is that the sea is most too sublime to be grasped by either poet or painter, and every effort is, must be, something of a compromise.

That much may be said of all painting. No painter has ever yet done what he *would*; he has done what he *could*. That fact, with the many distortions of purpose that time and place and circumstance have wrought in pictures should give us pause in making judgments about them. The pictures in a gallery are at best only the reminders of high aspiration and noble ideals. Unlike Shakespeare's pages they cannot be eternally revised, reproduced, and kept alive. They are fading slowly into ashes; and what they have to say to us, with all their beautiful way of saying it, is becoming less legible year by year. Yet the wisest and most profound of pictorial thoughts, the most beautiful and ornate of pictorial settings are now strewn for us along the walls of galleries; and it behooves us to read and ponder and see while the vision remains to us. We shall see wrongly and perhaps confuse things good with things bad; but in the end we shall gain something worth having, and be the better for our experience.

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